



The European dimension

The decisions taken by the EEC education ministers last week (page 8) are important, not so much for what they promise immediately, as for the possibility of future developments. They mark an important step forward by the Community into areas where their legal competence is doubtful.

They clearly have some treaty responsibilities for enabling qualified people to take their professional expertise across national frontiers within the Community. They have similar responsibilities for craft skills and, hence, for vocational training which also links up with social and economic policy. And they have obligations towards migrant workers from inside and outside the Nine, to enable such migrants' children to receive an education which will fit them to return home and pursue higher education in their own communities without disadvantage.

These represent the minimum areas of EEC educational concern. But with more or less enthusiasm, the education ministers have also wanted to see other kinds of collective action: for example, to promote the learning of European languages, to encourage youth and student interchange, and so on.

A sinuous path to avoid precedent

These are not covered by the Treaty of Rome and, aware of the political dangers of going outside the treaty in one matter if this creates a precedent for another, the education ministers have been at pains to tread a sinuous path. They have made a distinction between their actions taken formally as the Council of Ministers, strictly within the treaty, and those which emanate from the same group of ministers' meeting within the Council.

They will work through a standing education committee, on which the commission will be represented, and to the commission is deputised the executive role in carrying out the resulting educational policies. Nobody should be misled by the small size of the initial appropriation—£300,000—because the precedent and the principle are what count at this stage.

The attitude of the United Kingdom in the two or three years of negotiation and discussion which led up to last week's meeting seems to have been lukewarm. The reasons are perfectly understandable though no better for the Mrs Thatcher's coldness towards Europe was evoked into an open hostility to any intergovernmental educational activity. When Mr Prentice succeeded her, "reconciliation" and the referendum brought continued respect.

Scepticism, nit-picking and procrastination

This seems to have crystallised into a departmental view that the only proper stance for Britain in any discussion of education within EEC is one of unconstructive watchfulness. This has probably done no more than correctly interpret the unco-operative attitudes of unco-operative ministers; but it certainly has not made it any easier to get a recognition of what policy should be now that the referendum is out of the way.

There are—and are always going to be—much more pressing matters for the home. Mr Mulley is not particularly depressed. Mr Jones, Lessor, remains depressed. Mr Jones, Lessor, remains depressed. Mr Jones, Lessor, remains depressed.

icism can easily find its cheapest outlet in nit-picking and procrastination. It is strenuously denied that this is what actually happened and, of course, there were many points of denial and drafting where the DES had to prevent the Secretary of State being committed to actions beyond his statutory control. But whether the United Kingdom representatives were negative or just dogmatically refused to be pushed to the point of conceding to the things cool, carried out with exemplary zeal.

Positive thinking and consultation needed

There is nothing wrong with summing up for a minority view. But negative mutes can be self-defeating. To prevent things from developing in a way you dislike in the Brussels context, the most effective response may be to offer better suggestions—to put up positive alternatives—because you know, and everybody else knows, that the moral veto can only be used sparingly, and as a last resort, in some really major issue.

The time has come for Mr Mulley to consider very seriously how the British participation in European education policy-making should be organized. Until now, consultation with teachers, local authorities and other interested groups has been rudimentary. The NUT have a file of unsatisfactory correspondence asking for the opportunity to discuss British policy which includes a succession of prevaricating letters from secretaries of state and their officials. The first need is for some kind of standing consultative organization.

Mr Midley has proved the point by sending out to the teachers' unions and the I.E.A. associations a copy of the education ministers' draft resolution, for comment—but doing only about a fortnight before the Brussels meeting was due to take place. Much earlier consultation was much earlier when there was still time to influence the negotiations.

Much envied—but not for long

Second, the DES should broaden the recruitment of the teams which go into but for Britain. Educational issues, it is true that EEC is an intergovernmental organization and the main representation will be through the DES, and into the Foreign Office (which is deeply bored by such peripheral matters as education). But the DES should be conspicuous among the Nine for bringing in consultants from the other partners in the education service. After all, one of the main British contributions to the EEC should be the experience of decentralized policy-making and respect for the autonomous initiative of teachers and institutions.

There is a state of mind as much as anything else. In justice to the DES, it must be said that much of their negative attitude towards Europe springs from a misinterpretation of this state of mind as a determination to stop "them" from interfering traditional British methods of building through. Somehow the positive side has also to be stressed—this, after all, is what the Europeans envy about British education which, however surprising it may seem to depressed Britons, still arouses keen interest for long if only British critics are not in their own possession of the way our affairs are presently conducted.

The recent publication of William Robinson's *Juvenile Theft: The Social Factors* raises three general issues of the utmost topicality and importance.

The investigation, which was financed by grants from the Home Office to the Surrey Research Centre of the London School of Economics, cost £120,800. In times of economic stringency when the words "social return from research", "accountability" and "retrenchment" are on everyone's lips, the following questions must be asked: Are we getting value for our money? What insights can be gained from the quantitative research approach to such social problems as juvenile delinquency? Should more funds be allocated to studies of this kind?

The results of this research received widespread publicity last month, and in most cases the statistics were accepted at face value. Even the local evening newspaper in North-Suffolk heralded the arrival of this study on London boys with the front-page headline "Nine out of 10 boys are thieves—parents urged to lead gang-busters". Dotted figures were quoted without any evaluation and the ordinary reader, assuming that he was confronted with established scientific facts, but just how valid are these results?

There is a danger that politicians and civil servants may assume that the approach adopted in this book is the only one possible in the social sciences. In the House of Commons on November 27, Mr Roy Jenkins said he and his advisers thought that the data were valid; some of the conclusions were obvious, others were not well founded and others were a direction for future policy changes. All other research methods in the book are dismissed as "unreliable".

Only a detailed examination of the book can answer these questions. Dr Robinson enjoys a high reputation as a statistician and a methodologist, and I have nothing but admiration for the sheer hard work put into this immensely detailed study by him and his colleagues. They claim to have investigated the feasibility of 45 hypotheses about causal factors in the development of juvenile theft.

The research was commissioned in 1960 and the basic information was collected in 1967-68 from three-hour long interviews with 1,425 London boys aged 13 to 16. The "Hypothesis-Deletion Method", by which a series of testable expectations are derived from any hypothesis and these are then tested by means of "high-powered statistical techniques".

The findings, which took five years to prepare, are presented in a book of over 400 pages. I counted more than 300 tables of figures and 40 figures, not to mention appendices of correlational matrices and the full texts of questionnaires. (I had not realized before how laborious the statistical approach could be.)

Much as I was initially intrigued by the ingenuity of some of the techniques employed, I became increasingly appalled at the triteness

It's an unfair cop

Frank Coffield questions the need for recently published research on juvenile theft and the way it was carried out

of the main recommendations, most of which had already been suggested by Cyril Burt in 1925 or by Frederick Thrasher in 1927. Moreover, in my opinion the hope of ever finding "the cause" of juvenile delinquency by applying more and more sophisticated research techniques is seriously misplaced.

Throughout, the language used is that of the business and computer world. The boys were "processed through" the "algorithm" was measured, and the way of control checked by a "quality control officer". Reading chapter after chapter was like trying to drink pint after pint of drugged partridge. In short, we have here the unreadable in full pursuit of the unattainable.

The investigators claim to have taken research in criminology beyond "mere correlational studies", but they do not deal with the objections of sociologists like Stan Cohen who sees this search for causes as "the obsessive game of finding the Holy Grail which will tell us the secret of deviance" (*Images of Deviance*). And no better example of this type of social science research could be found than this book which contains not one worthwhile remark from any of the boys whose answers are reduced to endless numbers and percentages.

At times I had trouble in taking the research seriously. Take the interview, for example. The appointed man (sic) arranged with the boy an evening of his choice. The lecturer (sic) took him by car to the interviewing centre. Reluctant boys were sent "an attractive young female appointment maker". Other inducements offered were a £1 fee; drinks, sandwiches and cigarettes; "break the boy's boredom" during the interview; and at the end, the choice of a pop record or a Churchill memorial even and either the three or a taxi home. The interview itself "coordinating the boy's individual resistance to talking"; it sounds worse than that but still raises ethical doubts in my mind.

Much work went into ensuring that the "eliciting procedures" used in the interview were reliable, but they were not subjected to crucial tests of validity, as the author himself makes clear. What, then, is the relationship between what the boys said about their stealing and their actual behaviour? Did they over- or underestimate their thefts or did they give the interviewer the answers they thought he wanted?

If the information gathered from the interviews was an inaccurate reflection of actual behaviour, then all the most sophisticated analyses in the world remain futile.

When, for example, John Bowley's hypothesis is tested to see whether separation from parents at early ages makes boys more likely to steal, the information is gathered retrospectively from the boys themselves, how can adolescent boys know of parental absences when they themselves were under five years of age except from family talk? Are parents likely to tell their children if they were in prison or in mental hospital or living with another person? It just so happens that not only is the information likely to be false, but it was not a waste of time and money collecting it in this way in the first place?

This lack of judgement runs through the report. The last chapter deals with schoolwork, including two hypotheses: "the liking or being backwashed at school leads boys into greater involvement in stealing. Boys are classified as 'backwash' by the type of school they attended, the stream they were in, and their position in class."

Boys were rated as liking or disliking school on the basis of two questions: "How did you feel about your school work?" and "How did you get on with most of your teachers?" The author acknowledges that the "measurement" of backwash was "unsatisfactory" but he writes: "It is worthless, but it is the only way of measuring it." This approach is a travesty of the scientific method.

What of the findings about the nature and extent of the boys' stealing? No attempt is made to relate particular findings either to social statistics or to the work of any other researcher. Indeed, a footnote on page 70 encourages the reader to make the comparisons himself. Remember the book—without an index either—costs £15.

No matter how hard the data may appear to be, the problem of interpreting the results remains. After investigating the causal connection between parental punishment and delinquency, "something in the evidence" was found "to suggest that boys who are not punished by their parents for their misbehaviour are thereby led to commit less stealing". The author, but no one familiar with the psychological research, is puzzled by this result and is reduced to suggesting that some of the boys must have misinterpreted the question. How many other questions were misunderstood?

Finally, this barrage of technical weapons has discovered that "there is more church instruction against stealing given to boys who frequently attend church" and "religiosity is more likely to occur among those who dislike school". I am sure that other such gems are they worth £120,800?

Juvenile Theft: The Social Factors, by William A. Robinson, Harper and Row £15. 06318026X.

Frank Coffield is a lecturer in the education department of Keele University.

'Make parents pay for vandalism'

by Sue Cameron

Parents must foot the bill when their children go on the rampage and wreck property, the Assistant Masters Association said this week.

The AMA have been asked to advise the DES on how to cut down the damage caused by vandalism and arson. They say one course of action is to hit back hard whenever the culprits are identified.

Local authorities should always be ready to prosecute vandals over 16, and the parents of younger wrongdoers should be asked to pay at least some of the cost of repairs. Even when parents cannot or will not pay up, they should always be told the cost of the damage done.

The AMA say another way of reducing damage in schools is to insist that repairs are carried out quickly. If broken windows and furniture are not mended, pupils start to think that damage does not matter. They are also likely to become demoralized and find ways in which to vandalize and disrupt.

But if teachers can build a sense of pride in their pupils, they are far less likely to deface school walls or wreck furniture and fittings. Good pastoral care within a school, behaviour in the hall, the desks, chairs, lockers and books belong to them and must therefore be properly looked after.

The AMA say some local authorities invite school vandalism by always using the cheapest materials and by ignoring the need for security. Pupils are far less likely to care for school property when it is easily marked or broken through normal wear and tear. Teachers should be asked to give advice

on furniture and fittings an unnecessary accidental damage can be avoided. It is also essential for school buildings to be made secure with special locks and gates if necessary. It is often far too easy for vandals to break into schools and money spent on keeping them out would be well spent. The police and the fire service should be consulted on this.

This week the Association of Educational Psychologists published their evidence to the DES on the general question of violent and disruptive behaviour in schools. They emphasize the need for more reliable information because there is little to be gained from generalized and sometimes highly emotive national surveys. These often put too much emphasis on pupil violence without giving any background information about individual pupils.

The psychologists say local surveys would be more useful and they suggest L.E.A.s should be given guidelines to help them carry these out. L.E.A.s should also find out ways in which violent and disruptive pupils have been successfully dealt with either by their own schools or by other, external agencies.

This week Devon also issued a pamphlet on violent and disruptive behaviour in schools and they have assured teachers and governors they will always get full support in dealing with difficult children. The pamphlet, written by a working party under the chairmanship of Mr John Owen, the chief education officer, says lessons must not be disrupted by a small minority of badly behaved pupils. They call for a strict definition of how much can be tolerated by teachers in the face of extreme misbehaviour.

Tuition fees soar for 4.5m students

Tuition fees for higher and further education students will go up by 30 per cent next year, Mr Fred Mulley, the Education Secretary, announced the rise in the Commons this week.

About 4.5m people will be affected, ranging from evening class students in undergraduates. Overseas students on advanced courses will face the biggest increases, from £310 to £416.

University students will pay £182 instead of £140, students on advanced further education courses will pay £150 instead of £115. The average cost of a recreational evening class will go up from £8 to £11.

Most students will have the increase met for them by their local authorities as part of their grants. But about 13m will have to find some or all of the increase from their own pockets.

The new fees will start next September and are expected to increase the income from £65m to about £85m.

Fees were last increased in March when university fees doubled, and other fees went up 20 per cent.

The scales are recommended, not obligatory, but nearly all local authorities and institutions are expected to implement them.

The Inner London Education Authority are seeking an injunction to the High Court today to ban a former student of Kingsway College from the college premises.

Mr Werner Ullrich, aged 20, left the college in July but was appointed as an administrator of a students' general meeting in October. He was sacked by students a month later.

The college has had accusations this year in support of student demands for better social facilities.

Advisers, psychologists to get 39 per cent rise

An arbitration tribunal has recommended that educational advisers, inspectors and educational psychologists should be given Houghton-type pay rises.

The recommendation, announced this week, is a victory for the employees' panel of the Surlbury committee which negotiates the pay of advisers, educational psychologists, youth service officers and school meals organizers. Led by Mr Fred Jarvis, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, they have asked for all four groups to receive Houghton-type salary awards, but the authorities' panel had refused.

The arbitral award will mean increases of up to 39 per cent for

educational advisers and up to 21 per cent for psychologists. But some youth service officers and school meals organizers will only receive increases of up to 9 per cent.

Mr Jarvis said this week he warmly welcomed the recommendations of the arbitration panel—"in the main". He was disappointed that youth service officers and school meals organizers were not to receive Houghton-type pay rises.

It is expected that the recommendations of the arbitration tribunal will be embodied in a full agreement when the Surlbury committee meets on January 9. The award will not be affected by the Government's pay policy because the salary claim was referred to arbitration before the present policy was introduced.

Unemployment a 'time bomb'

The growing unemployment among the young was a "sociological time bomb" according to Mr Jack Chambers, of Regent's Park secondary school, Southampton, speaking on Wednesday.

Mr Chambers, an executive member of the National Union of Teachers, urged the Department of Education and Science, the Training Services Agency, industry and trade boards, and everyone concerned with 13 to 19 year olds to start co-operating at once.

At a conference in London called by the British Association for Commercial and Industrial Education, he said that local winning parties should be set up to discuss the educational and social development of young people.

He said that all the relevant bodies were failing to co-operate, but were sitting, somewhat uncomfortably and with their backs to each other, on a sociological time-

bomb set to explode in ten or three years time.

They should start by discussing new curricula and easing the transition from school to work.

It was wrong to think that schools were not involved in vocational education. The C.I.E. and C.S.E. were regarded by most parents simply as a way of getting a better job.

There is nothing more narrowly vocational than G.C.E. and yet it leads into a vocational direction that absorbs only about 8 per cent of the school output, he said.

Any alternative curriculum would have to be acceptable to the post-school world. It was an use learning the narrow academic nature of the schoolteacher's career route if the economic and industrial population endorses a philosophy which sets the acquisition of university-type learning at its pinnacle and invests in the belief that the intensive study of some subject of a single subject somehow leads to personal and cultural enrichment.

Managers' political allies

During the inquiry's first visit to Islington to seek the views of Tyndale's parents on their home ground they heard six non-manager parents and two parent managers who between them exemplified the sharp differences in background which have been cited repeatedly as a major factor in the situation at the school.

Five of the non-manager parents, who appeared, typical of the families who have lived around the school for generations, were highly critical of the school.

One of the mothers said, sadly, that when the school went over to pupils' free choice: "The children didn't do any work and they were hard to teach."

Another said when Mr Ellis was running the school her son spent all his time playing and could leave class when he liked. Now that temporary staff were running the school: "He has to ask when he wants to be excused."

The child had now learnt to write his name and was bringing books home. She alleged, angrily, that when she had taken the boy to school during the teachers' strike one of the staff had called him a blackie.

Teachers' counsel, Mr Richard Harvey, elicited that the boy had moved up from the infants school only three weeks before the supply staff took over the school. But she insisted that he could read a little before transfer, and had been in class weeks.

A father said his son began to lose ground in reading and writing after he left the class run by Mrs Irene Howles, the deputy head, to whose abilities other parents paid tribute. He told the inquiry that he was worried, however, about the child's safety. The head, he alleged, did not know on one occasion that the boy had run out of the school and was playing in the streets.

Two other parents described how they alleged, they were pressured into signing a petition supporting the teachers. One said she thought

London inquiry Week seven

Report by Mark Jackson

WILLIAM TYNDALE SCHOOL

London's costliest school inquiry breaks for Christmas today with its work half done (cost to ILEA to date £30,000).

A new urgency has been introduced by the chairman, Mr Robin Auld, QC. The 19 lawyers for the seven parties to the inquiry on Monday knew they will be expected to work faster and longer. The New Year will bring double shifts as they all move to Islington to hear local evidence in the evenings after a full day's work at County Hall.

Mr Auld says that the decision to speed up the process is his own, and is based simply on his view that they cannot be allowed to drag on indefinitely. But the Inner London Education Authority need to know what he says before they make any decisions about the future of William Tyndale Junior School, whose roll is now down to below 100—and its feeder infant school.

In his main evidence, Mr Tennant said that he could not recall making a suggestion of this kind.

In his main evidence, Mr Tennant said that he had become concerned about the poor public relations of the headmaster. He felt there was a gap between who was actually being observed and what was being shown to the school.

Mr Tennant was questioned in turn by Mr Harvey, for the teachers, Mr Edward Davidson, for the ILEA, and by Mr Auld himself about his role in various links to the press. He said he could be recalled as a school governor, Mrs Elizabeth Hoodless, advising that they should seek certain information from the TES because she was "sure it was the only paper that Mr Hinds read".

He told Mr Auld that he had authorized the release to the press of the confidential interim report of the teachers' strike because he hoped the publicity would help him persuade Mr Auld to prevent the teachers' return to the school for a full inspection.

The chairman of the Tyndale managers, Mr Brian Tennant, denied on Tuesday that he had ever encouraged the staff to strike. Mr Richard Harvey, for the teachers, suggested to him that he had advised the junior teachers to strike in protest against the ILEA inspection.

All the best for Christmas and all the best in educational publishing for the New Year.

Shape and Number, a major secondary mathematics course. Maths for General Education, an important project for non-academic pupils in their final two years in the secondary school.

Discovering France, attractive kits on different regions of France.

Chemistry Today, an up-to-date CSE textbook.

History through the Newsmag—The 1890s, 16mm film for the 13-18s using original film as a source of evidence.

Unit 2, a structured mathematics card scheme for top infants and lower juniors.

Our World Wallcharts, two sets of attractive, colourful wallcharts.

Land Travel, a completely integrated kit, packed with lively and comprehensive material for project work on transport.

Fact Finders, a magnificent series of information books for lower juniors.

from MACMILLAN EDUCATION

Houndmills Basingstoke Hampshire

Letters to the Editor

Muslims: an identity crisis

Sir—I was pleased to read of the EEC's decision that something must be done in education to ensure that immigrant children retain their cultural identity (December 5).

These children must be taught in their own languages. They must learn about their cultural heritage. Research has shown that identity is crucial for intellectual, emotional and personality development. Unfortunately, the policy of integration, the result is that immigrant children lose their identity, which also causes low academic achievement and emotional difficulties.

Among immigrants, Muslim children suffer most. Special attention must be paid to the difficulties. I would like the Department of Education and Science and the Local Authorities to ensure that they do not suffer any more. Qualified Muslim teachers must be recruited to look after their interests. Arrangements must be made to teach them languages,

such as Urdu, Arabic, Bengali and Gujarati, and subjects such as Islamic history and culture. These children must become part and parcel of the school curriculum.

Special attention must also be given to such things as school meals. Arrangements must be made for Muslim children to have Halal meat and beef as well as vegetarian dishes. At secondary level, Muslim girls must be educated separately, and their daily prayers, Friday prayers and take place during dinner time and they do not take more than 10 minutes. Friday is a holy day for Muslims and staff and students should be allowed to attend mosque prayers in the mosque. Muslim festivals should also be celebrated in schools which have a number of Muslim pupils.

Muslims can retain their identity only if the L.E.A.s provide such facilities.

IKHTHAR AHMAD, Muslim Welfare Association, 76 Chesterton Terrace, London, E.13.

Absent friends

Sir—I would like to make a plea on the behalf of the art of letter writing as a topic for study at school. It seems that many children having been given the task of writing a letter for home, have been given the task of writing a letter for home, have been given the task of writing a letter for home.

In particular I would suggest that the syllabus should include a denunciation of the offensive habit of having a letter signed "per pro" dictated by Mr. Blank and signed in his absence. I suffer from a gland issue of this sort of thing.

As I am too idle to come to my office often or alternatively too important and busy to be bothered with the likes of you I therefore remain,

LINDA TUCKER, 66 Geoffrey Matthews, Centre for Science Education, Chelsea, College.

More letters, page 9

'Inertia our enemy, change our ally'

"Any serious analysis of how we in Britain have handled the problems facing us over the last 25 years—and of how we might do so in the future—must include, at the top of the agenda, a critical examination of our education policy. The system of education has a unique influence in determining people's skills and capacities. Give the wrong type of education and you get the wrong kind of people. As Britain enters the final quarter of the twentieth century the two key questions are therefore: what kind of people do we want our educational system to turn out? and is our system of education capable of producing these people?"

We are now living in an advanced technological society. More than ever, we depend on our industry—together with commerce—to produce Britain's livelihood. Yet our system of education, in particular of higher education, still reflects the priorities of a century ago. Although the sun has set on the British Empire, we still seem to be producing a class of administrators to govern the colonies which no longer exist.

It is estimated that between 1956 and the early 1980s the working population with a degree will have nearly doubled, from three quarters of a million to nearly one and a half million. But on present figures fewer than one in four of new graduates go into industry and less than one in 10 enter commerce.

Meanwhile, science places in our universities and colleges remain unfilled. And classics graduates with first-class degrees—there was one highlighted this week in the press—discover that they cannot find jobs.

With thousands of roundholes waiting to be filled in science and technology, our universities and colleges are busily churning out countless square pegs. The educational system is simply not providing the kind of people which our industry needs.

The causes go deep and so must the solutions. There are certain areas where steps could be taken straight away.

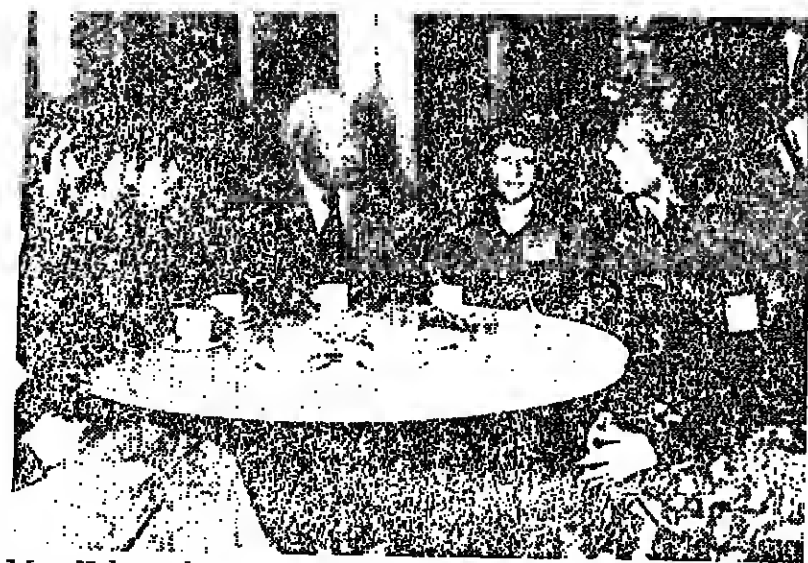
First, those responsible for leadership in education and industry must break down the mutual suspicion which still persists between them. For too long they have gazed at each other, teeth bared. They must now get together more often. More educationists need to learn about the needs of industry. More industrialists need to learn how to sell themselves to pupils and students in order to attract them into jobs.

Second, there has got to be a dramatic improvement in the career guidance offered in schools, colleges and universities.

Third, there needs to be an extension of vocational education so that young people are taught in school or college and the jobs to which they are moving.

... raises the fundamental question of the curriculum taught in schools and universities. I know that in many educational circles the very mention of the word 'curriculum' is taboo. It is the great unmentionable.

But when there is such a dramatic imbalance between what the educational system provides and what society's needs, is society to remain for ever aloof on the subject of the curriculum?



Mr Edward Heath, in a speech to Conservative students in Edinburgh at the weekend, turned his attention to education for the first time since 1967. This is the third in a series of speeches and articles planned to identify what is wrong with the way we run our affairs and to stimulate a national debate.

Mr Heath's first speech—in Folkestone on November 16—set out the need for such a debate. The second—in Rome on November 21—examined the future of capitalism and the role of free enterprise.

This is a slightly shortened version of the Edinburgh speech.

Above: Mr Heath with students at the conference

riculum in our schools and colleges? I will go no further than this: should we not at least be debating whether we are satisfied with the curriculum taught; and are we still satisfied with all pupils between them. For too long they have gazed at each other, teeth bared. They must now get together more often. More educationists need to learn about the needs of industry. More industrialists need to learn how to sell themselves to pupils and students in order to attract them into jobs.

The biggest mistake would be to sweep the subject under the carpet. In many ways, it is the curriculum which lies at the heart of the real debate over education; yet because it touches so many sensitive nerves, it is this which is so rarely debated.

Turning to secondary education in particular, there is a common failure to identify objectives. Too often, the debate about secondary education is discussed in terms of ideology. Parents are not interested in ideology. They do care passionately about the kind of education their children are receiving.

Right across the country parents are increasingly worried about falling standards in the schools—falling standards in the basic skills of reading and writing, falling standards of learning, and falling standards of discipline. Is it surprising therefore that parents sometimes feel left out in the cold when the political debate centres on the kind of school to be organised rather than on the quality of the education provided?

educational policy for the 94 per cent of children who have no choice and will never have any choice but to go to state schools.

It is in the state schools, where the vast majority of our children go, that we should channel our efforts and energies towards raising standards of education. As Doreen said: "Upon the education of the people of this country the fate of this country depends."

This must involve a degree of specialisation within the schools if all the children are to discover their own special aptitudes and to realise their own potential. This can be achieved within the comprehensive schools as elsewhere. In so doing the academic child can be given the opportunities necessary for developing intellectual qualities to the highest degree just as the more practical child can have every chance of specialising in vocational aptitudes.

To most people, this may seem blindingly obvious; but not, apparently, to the Government. Indeed, in the small print of the Queen's Speech, the Government have committed themselves to, and I quote, "the abolition of selection in secondary education". It is this most which, says, it will be a crushing blow for individuality and diversity. It will mean that children who share the same interests and aptitudes cannot be brought together for their own benefit and that of the community.

It is right that parents should want a greater say in the schools which their children attend. There has been much public debate about whether parental choice could be added with the introduction of the voucher system.

On paper, this may have a superficial attraction. But to those who cry caution, I would add my own voice. The initial, most likely, prospect is that far too many children's parents will opt for the most popular school. The only way then to decide who goes where will be, in effect, by pulling names out of a hat.

Meanwhile, what happens to the schools where the good teachers are leaving in droves? Standards of education will be spiralling downwards with fewer teachers and less money. In the worst case, the schools will be taken over by the local authority and run under new management. This is, of course, quite impracticable.

An economic crisis, the demand of the parents for high standards, the change over to a new system of schools is highly elastic. And in the meantime, numerous children will be condemned to a school which is run by a far less able staff than they would have had. The voucher system needs to be examined with a healthy degree of scepticism.

In this speech I have tried to bring education into the centre of the debate about our country's future, which is where it belongs. I believe that it is a crisis in education today. It is a crisis in which the right kind of skills will act as a severe brake on our economic development.

Education, as in so many other aspects of our national life, inertia is our enemy; change is our ally. But let us, in the Conservative Party, remember this. Nineteen out of every 20 children are, and will continue to be, educated to the state sector. Their interests must always be our interests, regardless of where they live and the schools they attend. However much we care about the right of children in the private sector—and in the Conservative Party, at least, we do—our primary task must be to tell our

No guarantee of standards —Boyson

Parents should be free to withdraw their children from any school if they are not satisfied with its academic standards, Dr Rhodes Boyson, Conservative MP for Brent North and chairman of the National Council for Educational Standards, said this week.

Speaking at a conference staged by the council in London, Dr Boyson said it was politically immoral for the Government to insist on compulsory school attendance if minimum academic standards were not guaranteed.

High truancy rates were a sign that parents were dissatisfied with the standards of teaching, William Tyndale School was an example, he said. At this school, currently the subject of a public inquiry, 55 per cent of the parents had withdrawn their children in protest over standards.

"Parents must be able to say if a school is not maintaining standards and take their children elsewhere. High truancy rates are a sign that parents believe minimum standards are not being taught in our schools."

Dr Boyson criticized the work of the National Foundation for Education Research and the Schools Council which he claimed were involved in obscure research. He called on the NFER to complete a major survey on the areas of the country which had gone comprehensive in order to compare academic standards and truancy rates before and after the change.

The Reverend Patrick Barry, headmaster of Ampleforth College, Yorkshire and chairman of the Headmasters' Conference, told the conference he believed freedom in education was being seriously undermined. It was his declared aim of the left wing to abolish all choice in education, but unless a way was found to increase and strengthen the choice of parents there would be a breakdown in consensus of opinion in which all good education relied.

This conference, also decided to send a strongly worded protest to Mr Fred Mulley, the Education Secretary, over compulsory membership of student unions. Students have to pay dues to their local students' union. These are normally paid automatically as part of local authority grants, and if local students have no say in the transaction, the council feel membership should be voluntary.

Professor Brian Cox, secretary of the council, said there had been a fall in academic standards since the introduction of comprehensive education in Britain. The chances of working-class children winning places at university had declined, and this was likely to get worse.

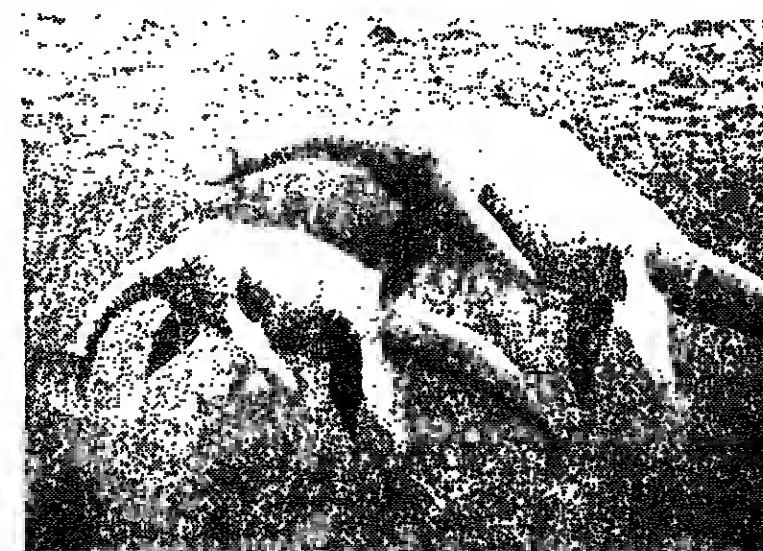
Science diary by John Maddox

Nessie? I don't believe it

Many of us have not heard the last of the Loch Ness monster, or, more given the formal name of *Nessiteros rhombopteryx* by Sir Peter Scott and Dr Robert Rines in *Nature* (December 11).

But such evidence for its existence as there is is much more widely a proof of the wish of otherwise level-headed people to believe in some more sophisticated form of life than fish. In the mid 1930s, and especially in the Dark Ages, these speculations were much more entertaining, witness the myriad medieval legends about beries in the lakes.

For the time being, in my opinion, the best evidence of the Loch Ness monster is no more susceptible to scientific examination than any heading (about which my views are clear). What is very much



Peter Scott's view of the monster: he drew this artist's impression after seeing photographs taken by the Bosnian team. "I feel the animals tell look very like this when we eventually find them," he said.

In question is the good sense of those who have given their names to it—Sir Peter Scott, Dr Robert Rines and the *Nature* team.

For given the inevitable doubt about the possibility of interpreting the photographs that have appeared in several newspapers during the past weeks, it is legitimate to ask those responsible should at least have provided the basic information about the provenance of the photographs that would have allowed others, perhaps not now but later, to arrive at an informed opinion.

In reality, however, nothing is said in the *Nature* article about the places in Loch Ness at which the

photographs were obtained, nothing is said about the kind of camera used and nothing is said about the meteorological conditions at the time. It is exceedingly hard to believe that what purports to be a serious contribution to science would have passed through even the most rudimentary refereeing system without this information having been asked for.

The fact that it was not volunteered suggests to me that the new genus *Nessiteros* should be classified by zoologists rather than by the exact fishermen and other reptiles but with the unicorn and the more recent yet.

Dangerous monkey business

Of all virus diseases, Marburg virus disease is perhaps the most awesome. It first appeared in 1967 in laboratory workers concerned with virus monkeys imported (via London) from Uganda and in a space of a few weeks, 31 people had been infected at Marburg and Frankfurt in Germany and even as far away as Belgrade. Seven of them died.

For some time and indeed until quite recently, there was speculation that the virus might have been transferred to the monkeys from some other kind of creature, possibly a bird, in the animal compound at London Airport. Now, however, it seems to be accepted that the virus monkeys were themselves the primary source of the disease.

More than that, it now seems it is possible to manage Marburg virus infection with fair chances of success, at least if the cause of the disease is recognised in time. In February this year, an Australian draughtsman and his girl companion arrived in South Africa after travelling south through East

Africa. He was promptly taken to hospital. A detailed account of what happened has now appeared in the *British Medical Journal*. Briefly, the young man died within five days (and after nine days of illness) was suffering from typhoid fever, from plague. By the time his companion fell sick, Lassa fever (another African virus infection carried by rodents) was the favoured diagnosis and indeed the treatment was at least partially effective.

But when one of the nursing staff in the hospital (to which the whole nursing team had by then been confined) fell sick, there was good evidence that Marburg virus was responsible. The journal's account provides the most detailed picture so far of the course of Marburg disease, which will in future have to be counted with yellow fever, Rift Valley fever, chikungunya fever and Lassa fever among the viruses and diseases which can be collected by

travellers from Africa. A rash that does not itch is the most characteristic feature of the infection. None of this implies that the world is about to be swept with Marburg disease, although it is likely to cast a pall on the export trade in virus monkeys from Africa. Fortunately there is no reason to expect that a disease as virulent as this could spread far from its natural reservoir of infection among wild animals.

What does emerge from the tale is the need for vigilance. Ten years or so ago, we were all afraid that doctors trained in countries such as Britain would become so unfamiliar with diseases such as malaria that they would be unable to diagnose them accurately. Now, it seems, it is also possible that they and the hospital staff will be slow to diagnose diseases with which nobody is familiar. And it would be a lucky turn of events if Lassa fever and Marburg fever, the two new viruses of the past 15 years, were in complete the list of previously unknown diseases.

Reports by Mark Vaughan

Thumbs down for streaming

Delegates clashed over the issue of comprehensive education and mixed ability teaching at the conference eventually carried a resolution welcoming the move away from streaming in schools.

Mr Michael Harrison, chief education officer for Sheffield, said all the evidence now showed that mixed ability teaching was at least as effective as streamed teaching, if not more so. But there was no doubt that mixed ability teaching was much more difficult and it was impossible to change without in-service training.

With the country on the verge of developing a universal education system, it was folly to economize on in-service training, he said. "It is a regrettable affair that it is anything is to be saved, then."

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As well as welcoming the Government's policy on comprehensive schools and direct grant schools, the conference urged Mr Mulley to deal quickly with the question of charitable status of private schools.

Urgent plea to start in-service training schemes

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And L.E.s should establish advisory committees for induction and in-service training, rationalize in-service training courses and investigate ways to reduce the responsibility of probationers without putting undue pressure on their schools.

In a later debate, the conference welcomed moves by the AEA and the DES to improve coordination in further and higher education.

Vicious circle traps immigrants

A survey in Haringey, North London, showed that children of immigrant parents were falling more and more behind in educational standards, Mr A. G. Graves, the borough's chief education officer, told the conference.

"Unless more and more is done in this field, the cycle of deprivation is going to turn into an iron circle, with an inner circle which is mainly black containing children who cannot break out of it."

The conference welcomed the Government's intention to introduce measures to stop racial discrimination, but also urged the Government to tackle the problems of racial disadvantage as soon as possible.

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All newcomers, acting and backstage, will be very welcome

Write for detailed information to: JOHN HOLIFIELD, FESTIVAL ORGANISER, PENDLEY MANOR, TRING, HERTFORDSHIRE HP23 5QZ

Sport

Squash is the big attraction

It will be a full house at Brandon Hall Squash Rackets Club, near Coventry, on December 27-30 when Britain's leading juniors compete in the national under-19 championships. For the first time there will also be an under-16 group.

The championships have attracted a record entry for the senior event and many would-be competitors had to be refused to keep the numbers down to 64.

Top seeds in the under-19 section are Gwain Brins (Gresham's School, Norfolk), John Roe, until recently at Bedford Grammar School, and Paul Chaplin, of the Royal Navy. All three have junior international experience.

In the under-16 group, restricted to 32 players, the top seeds are Senn Flynn (Aylesbury Grammar School) and Richard Le Lievre (Elizabeth College, Guernsey), whose brother was the under-19 runner-up last year.

Their chief opponents will be David Timmins (Ken) and Jonathan Crook (Bedford School), winner and runner-up in last season's under-14 championship.

Most of these boys will clash again early next month in the Junior Evans Cup which, unlike the Brinsdon Hall competition, will be open to non-British players.

Mr Tony Swift, who has been chief national coach of the Squash Rackets Association for nearly four years, is to leave in February for a job at the Sports Council in Bedford.

Rugby league goes 'national'

Schools playing rugby league are now half-way through their first "national" (that is, Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cumbria) competition. This arrangement replaces the old system of running the game along separate county lines.

The new competition has two divisions, each with eight teams for boys under 16. They are town teams who play each other only once. Last year, in a trial run, there were home and away games but this created fixture problems.

Each team also has an under-13 side who play the same town as the older pupils. The juniors have not been sorted by standard and instead are divided into two sections. The top two in each will play off to decide the under-13 championship.

The new league will help to select players for the English schools' rugby league tour of France at Easter.

People

HM Queen Margrethe of Denmark has been elected an honorary fellow of the London School of Economics. She was an LSE student in 1968.

Mrs Betty Scott-Ashworth is the new director of the National Deaf Children's Society. She was the society's welfare secretary.

Mr Hilary Chapman, a teacher of French and German at John Cleve-



First and third

by Asif Khan

Coventry College of Education women's team (above) won the British Colleges swimming championships for the second year in succession. At the Robinson Pool, Bedford, they beat a strong Bedford College of Physical Education side in a tense finish for the Hazelwood Trophy.

The men's event was won by Madeley College of Education, Staffordshire. The championship attracted 15 women's and 12 men's teams.

Coventry are the first college to win three times in the seven-year history of the competition, which is organized by the British Colleges Association. They first won in 1972, were beaten by Bedford a year later but regained their winning form in 1974.

Their captain, former junior international, Lesley Walker, said she was delighted when her girls "lipped Bedford" at the post. "It was a great team effort."

Most of the competing institutions taking part were physical education colleges. Coventry did well, considering that they only had a small

intake of physical education students.

Miss Walker, who, as a pupil at Queen's School, Bishley, Hertfordshire, won English Schools titles and also held a national age-group record, paid tribute to their coach, Mr Dickie Hocking, a physical education lecturer at the college.

Coventry's outstanding performer was free stylist Judith Sims, who represented Britain at the Munich Olympics and took the national biathlon title at Crystal Palace last year. At Bedford she won two individual races and also helped her team to win the medal.

Two eight-member squad, aged between 18 and 21, included Gina Lukens, an American exchange student from Michigan, who is returning home this month.

After the championship Miss Sims and Pip Jones were picked for the combined British colleges and universities team to swim against the national team.

Miss Walker, a third year student, said Coventry's chance of making it a hat-trick next year were slim. Nearly half the present side would have left. "Unless we get some very good swimmers in the first year I don't think we stand much of a chance."

Scots team for Richmond

Edinburgh Academy provide four of the Scottish schoolboys' side for the annual rugby union match against England at Richmond on January 1 (2.30).

Team: E. J. Paton (Edinburgh Academy); C. J. Williamson (Kelvin Academy); R. J. Gordon (Trinity College, Glenelg); A. Short (Sherborne School); G. H. Jackson (Edin-

burgh Academy); D. G. Kilgore (Kell School); D. J. W. Knox (George Watson's); N. A. Linton (Capit Edinburgh Academy); D. G. Miller (Marischal Castle School); J. G. B. Macdonald (Marischal Castle School); J. G. Watt (Edinburgh Academy); P. D. P. Wise (Trinity College, Glenelg); I. A. Stewart (Fettes College); H. D. C. Flett (Dunbar Academy); A. P. Lean (Loreto School).

Colleges

Mr Brian Cone, to be principal of the new City of Liverpool College of Higher Education. The college will be formed next September by the amalgamation of C. F. Mott College and Ethel Wormald College. Mr Cone is principal of C. F. Mott.

Universities

Miss Olive Stevenson, reader in social and administrative studies, Oxford University, to the chair of social work, Keele University.

Economics at 14-16

The Economics Association at Hull University have been given £16,000 by Eames Fairbairn Charitable Trust to finance a study, "Economics Education 14-16", under the direction of Mr B. J. Holley, lecturer in education.

Girl woodworkers

Five girls and their woman woodwork teacher from Tile Hill Wood comprehensive school, Coventry, have won £350 worth of tools and £30 worth of wood finishes in a competition for schools organized by Sterling Roncraft.

New look 'Brownie'

The Brownie magazine published weekly for nearly half a million Brownie Guides in the United Kingdom, is to be given a new look.

Religious education 12/13

14 Arts features

Books: social work; education; mathematics 15/16

17/18 Resources: costumes; museums; galleries

Talkback: poetry criticism; higher education choices 19

Easy to visualise

Colin MacInnes argues for greater attention to be given to learning through images rather than concepts



Holbein's portrait of Henry VIII: are such works of art more compelling images for learning than written or verbal descriptions?

One object of education should surely be that boys or girls leaving school—and, even more so, men or women qualifying at university—should have a mental picture of the history and culture not only of their own nation, but of all peoples in all ages.

To achieve this it will be necessary that the young be shown, from as early an age as possible, how they can erect in their minds a reliable scaffolding, or intellectual structure, to which all that they learn subsequently can be added in its relevant place.

Often this scaffolding will consist of reigns of monarchies, of centuries, and even of millennia; but these ways of situating time and cultural patterns leave many disadvantages. So far as reigns go, besides being often too short and, if long, arbitrary (for instance, there are at least three distinct periods in the "Victorian era"), they are also far too provincial—they pertain far too exclusively to one nation to be helpful in creating a world-picture of any age.

As for the centuries, these, besides being arbitrary as well (for what have societies of the early and late seventeenth century in England got in common?), are peculiarly difficult for the young to visualize and distinguish, especially in the great expanse of time before the Renaissance.

The word "visualize" gives us a key to what could be a more useful way of forming a timeless, international, cultural-historical scaffolding. For dates and reigns can only be learned intellectually, whereas if the child, and later the youth, is shown a visual structure made of the world's greatest artefacts, or for more memorable and practical mental pattern can be created in his mind.

To begin with, visual art is the one for which we have by far the richest continuous records—some (as the Lascaux cave paintings) dating back thousands of years. Of course these artworks are not objectively the oldest. For speech and song, not to mention dancing and instrumental music, are probably quite as old. But of no other art do we have so many ancient surviving creations of peoples of all ages and from all over the globe.

Some aspect, at least, of any people's visual art is comprehensible to those of other later races, whereas language is so dependent on such understanding. For besides the difficulties of translation, many languages are lost, and systems of writing are of relatively recent invention. So that even though all the profundities of some alien, ancient, visual art may not be clear to us, its creations will certainly give some idea—and often the only idea—of how these people lived, and what they believed.

There is also the fact that with visual art, the interactions of those of different cultures are far greater than in any other art form. Different languages inhibit verbal influence, to a great extent; and idiosyncratic modes of music make reciprocity between cultures that more difficult.

But visual influences can pass from one people to another with great rapidity, so that too may trace, for instance, in European architecture, sculpture and painting, elements of all cultures—even, according to Joseph Needham, that of "remote" China. With the exception, until recent centuries, of the totally isolated cultures of the Americas. This means that a child who sees art works of his own people simultaneously learns, to some degree, of the creations of others distant in time and space.

From a pedagogic viewpoint, visual images are far more compulsive than intellectually abstracted ones, like words formed by letters, or formulae made of mathematical symbols. They are even more compelling, possibly, than images conveyed by speech—for, for instance, Holbein's portrait of Henry VIII might impress more vividly than any verbal account of him could do.

Visual art-works are also instantly memorable; for who can forget what a picture of the pyramids looks like, whereas a verbal account of them, however accurate, might leave the vaguest ideas?

For the very young, or for retarded children or those of cultural minorities, visual teaching can be remarkably effective, indeed, so far as children go, this has long been recognized since visual aids are used extensively. But why only for children?

Perhaps it is a lingering puritanism that makes us continue, in education, with the iconoclasm of the Reformation, and continually most teachers are not at present equipped to give instruction in this fruitful way. For the notion still lingers that "art" is a frivolity or, at best, a luxury, and that while to read a book is to study, to look at a painting is mere self-indulgence.

I cannot resist adding a secondary, if rather specious, consideration—which is that visual instruction need not be costly. While conventional teaching may need the help of textbooks, for visual, slides or films, seen collectively, are really all that are essentially required.

Purists might say that to use artworks in this way, to teach not about art itself but about related subjects, is to fail to insist on the inherent value of works of art as such. Yet, even if art-works are used in this way, a child will also learn much about them as well as of the themes which they serve to explain, as of the nations and ages, the appreciation would come, if at all, by itself as we went along.

And since I believed that "appreciation" of anything can never be taught—but only the nature and attractions of the thing in question—I decided on a cultural-historical rather than an aesthetic approach, thinking that if students could relate the art-works to their own lives and those of others in different nations and ages, the appreciation would come, if at all, by itself as we went along.

Most of the students had little background knowledge and this helped in a way, since for many of them, a Chinese silk painting, for instance, was not much more unfamiliar than a Cézanne landscape. Though I used mostly British examples, I tried from the start to relate them to contemporary European creations, and then to works of peoples of the Middle East and Orient. I also tried always to show, during the demonstration of European art of any period, what was happening at the same time in cultures of other continents.

From time to time, we had evenings when slides were shown with no clue as to the provenance of the art-works, and when students were asked to say where and when the work of art was created and why they thought this was so. In guessing this, many were unexpectedly successful. Even when their guesses were wrong, they had often good reasons for making them, like thinking an Aztec sculpture was by Henry Moore. (When I found to my horror that many of them had attended classes for weeks without having yet visited any of London's superb collections, I persuaded them to do this as well, and to comment on what they had seen.)

The only experience I have had with children has been as friend or relative. On these occasions I have produced a vast collection of coloured cards of artworks that I had and once again asked them to say which works were created in about the same time, and what sort of peoples had invented them.

Once more, the children's intuitions, despite any lack of formal knowledge, were remarkable. Yet another advantage of visual art became apparent, which was that interest was always immediately aroused by concrete images of human beings, animals and landscapes, in a way that would scarcely be possible by any verbal or written description.

Many teachers, from John Ruskin onwards, have insisted on the importance of visual education in itself. I believe that, in giving this, one can also convey vital knowledge of other themes which, on a first superficial view, might not seem to bear much relation to visual art.

A story, a hymn

A parent offers an outsider's perspective on the way schools handle questions of belief

How would you react if you heard your five-year-old singing, with appropriate actions, the following hymn?

I'm too young to march with the infantry,
Ride with the cavalry,
Shoot with the artillery,
I'm too young to zoom o'er the enemy,
But I'm in the Lord's army. (Soliste.)
I'm too young to bomb with the bombardiers,
Dig with the engineers,
Pull with the pioneers,
I'm too young to sail all the seven seas,
But I'm in the Lord's army. (Soliste.)
My immediate reaction was to drag my children out of morning assembly, and burst in on the head teacher, demanding that they should no longer take part in religious education. In the event I did nothing, other than attempt to explain to my children over tea why I did not like that hymn too much, and grumble to my husband. The teachers and the school are worth too much respect for me to jeopardize our excellent relationship.

All the same, this particular hymn, with its militaristic overtones and implication that eventually the child will be old enough to bomb and kill (shoots of Northern Ireland), served to emphasize the generally unritualized way religious education is handled in infant schools—if ours is a typical example. Let me make clear my own particular lack of faith. Religion means nothing to me. I do not seek or shun things religious. Christianity is part of our culture, and it would be stupid to ignore or deliberately avoid it. To withdraw my children from religious education would imply a definite standpoint which I do not have. It would also cut them off from much daily activity in the school and isolate them from the others. The Christian teaching of love and forgiveness is admirable; exposure to and questioning of a faith cannot harm. Perhaps, however, religious instruction is too important to be left to the committed. A great part of the activity in our infant school revolves round religious topics. There

is a daily assembly; and the annual festivals—harvest, Christmas, Easter. Each teacher has at least one part of each week set aside for a Bible story or moral fable. Just how much of the religious message gets across to the children whose ages range from three to seven? As an observer on the sidelines, it seems to me that the presentation of religious activity confuses most children, and gives rise to the idea of God as an old man with a long white beard. This concept is bound to be destroyed eventually, thus destroying associated beliefs and the confidence in the teacher who perpetrates the myth. The daily assembly is a good example of how this distorted viewpoint is brought about. It usually consists of a hymn, a story, and a prayer, followed by a warning against misuse of skipping ropes and footballs. This juxtaposition of worship and exhortation can hardly fail to give rise to the idea of a deity who is bothered about trivial misdemeanours in the playground or classroom.

God has special glosses to look down through the clouds and see when you're being naughty," my younger daughter confided. "I don't believe that," the older one retorted, showing, to my mind, a healthy scepticism. How much do children actually get from the hymns and prayers? There are the classic examples: "Our Arthur, who art in Heaven . . ." "Harold be thy name . . ." "Who built the Ark? No one, no one . . ." The first thing, surely, is to ensure the child understands the vocabulary. It took a long time to stop my two saying "Cosanna" for "Gossama" after learning "The Hosianna", and neither of them had any idea what it meant. Several weeks were devoted to learning one hymn, the first verse of which goes as follows: The morning breezes softly blow O'er Olivet so fair, And bear the notes of joyous song Upon the balmy air; From out the rhy gates at dawn,

and a warning

With palms and blossoms sweet,
The children mingle with the throng
Their roving Lord to greet.

The language and syntax are totally foreign to the average five year old, and I doubt if they appreciate what the hymn is about. That is an extreme example. Improvements have been made, both in updating traditional hymns and finding new ones. "Widom o' rity will" has now become "Widom o' rity will", and there are lively simple hymns which get their message home bang on target.

Jesus' love is very wonderful,
Very wonderful, very wonderful,
Jesus' love is very wonderful,
Oh wonderful love.
So high, can't get over it,
So low, can't get under it,
So wide, can't get round it,
Oh wonderful love.

New tunes have been used for old hymns, slightly incongruously in some cases. It jers to hear "There is a green hill" sung to the tune of "House of the Rising Sun" (but I like it), and there is another hymn which is sung to the tune of "What shall we do with the drunken sailor?" These are minor evils: the children sing these hymns with spirit, although in the latter example a few always sing the last line "Barley in the morning", no matter how often instructed to the contrary.

Old habits die hard and hymns are still trotted out from an era that seems far distant. "Jesus waits me for a sunbeam". What on earth is that supposed to mean?

At worst assembly can degenerate into a kind of learning incomprehensible words and unmeaning tunes, followed by admonitions. At best it is a jolly singsong with a simple message of love and companionship, in which the relationship of one child with another, with the family, the school, animals, growing things, and the annual cycle can be expressed. A badly conducted assembly merely represents a missed opportunity.

A more fundamental criticism is the fact that God is used to sidestep awkward questions. "Where do babies come from?" "God makes them." "Teacher says that God makes babies, but teacher's wrong. It's the sperm and the egg," says one know-all, and takes to a book on inter-uterine development to prove it.

For a child whose parents have tried to answer all questions honestly, a glib resort to God as an explanation by a teacher can only undermine the child's confidence in the teacher. There are various levels of explanation, and their relationship must be made clear.

Nothing is black and white and children must learn to tolerate ambiguity. If God makes babies, why does he also make deformed or sick children? Simplistic answers won't do. There is a direct logic to a young child's approach to the structure of the world, which often cuts through half-truths and exposes the ridiculous assumptions that underlie our fumbling attempts at explanation.

"If heaven is in the ground," my three-year-old announced. "Why is that?" "Well, Billy's dog died and went to Heaven, and they buried it in the ground, so Heaven is in the ground."

When asked directly by my children if there is a God, I say I don't know. I tell them that some people believe that there is. Faith is a belief in something unprovable. I should like teachers to preface their statements about God with "I believe that . . ." and to be a little less dogmatic about how God interferes in our affairs.

The writer of this article is the mother of two children in a North of England primary school.

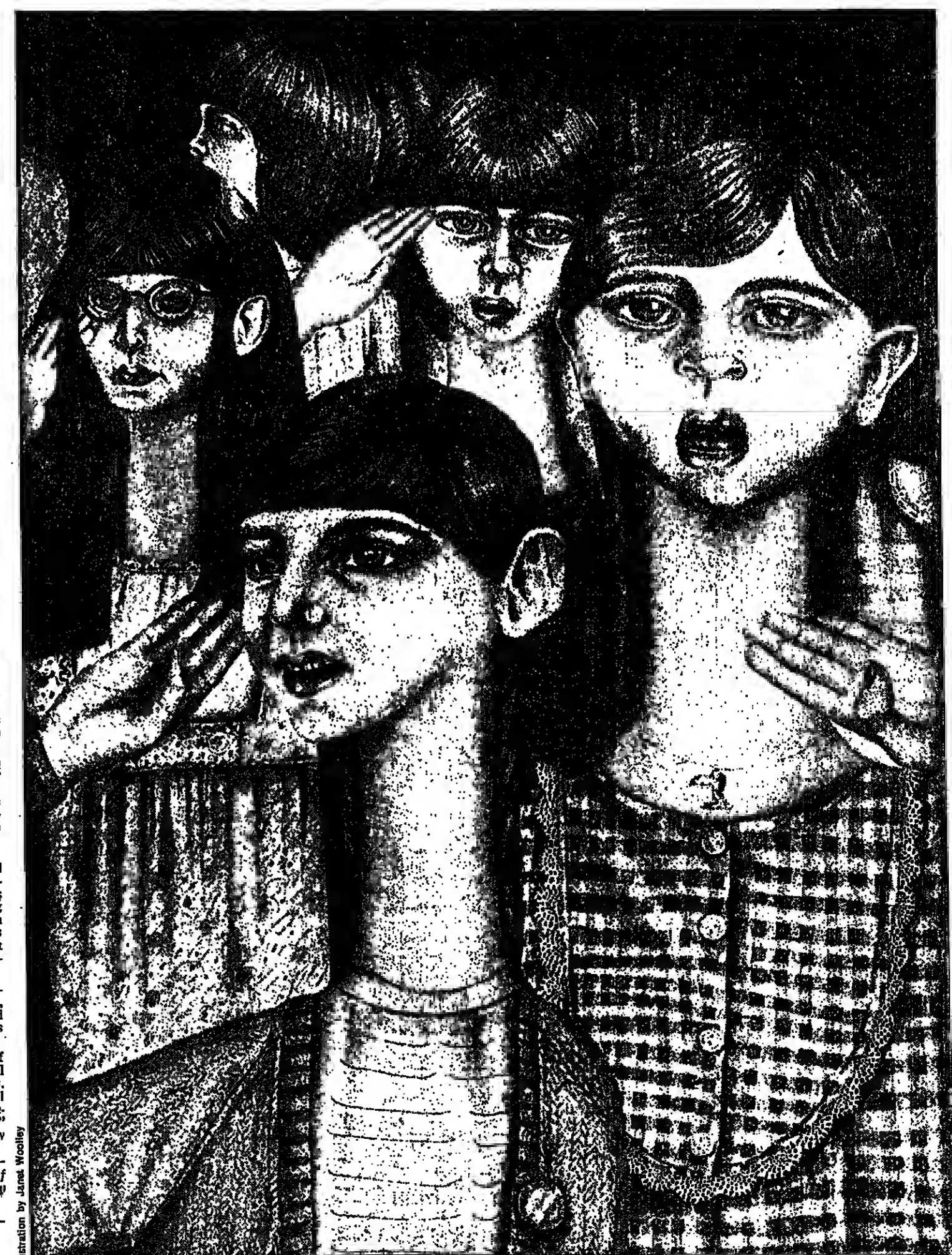


Illustration by Janet Woolley

Keeping faith with faith

Roger Owen argues the case for the continuance of compulsory religious education

The story is told of a teacher who drilled his class regularly (one might say religiously) in the catechism. Each day he began with the same child, asking round the class in turn, getting prompt replies to his predictable questions.

But one day a visiting HMI came in and decided to examine the class on the catechism. Picking on one child at random, he asked, "Who made you?" The child was silent. The inspector tried another pupil, but received the same bewildered, negative response; then another and another with similar results.

Eventually, in exasperation, he said, "Well, surely someone knows who made them?" A little girl at the front timidly raised her hand and replied, "Please sir, the boy whom God made has gone to the lavatory!"

If by religious education we mean an unreflective teaching of doctrines and dogmas, a learning by heart of creeds or passages of scripture, or the inculcation of a take-it-for-granted reverence for Jesus of Nazareth (or the Virgin Mary or Buddha or Mohammed), such teaching has little value and might well be harmful—although that sort of teaching is hardly deserving of the name religious education.

It is not the duty or function of a school to foster or attempt to convert a pupil to a belief in a particular religious faith. It is not the purpose of RE in state schools to bring about a commitment to Christ or the Christian faith. Undue pressure on children and immature adolescents who attend under compulsion is educationally indefensible; it is indoctrination in its most reprehensible form.

So what is the value of religious education in schools? The tradition of our national life has been largely shaped and sustained by behaviour and ideas closely associated with Christianity: religion, and particularly the Christian faith. Since education involves a thorough exploration of the environment and the received culture, this source of our

national heritage should be studied and appreciated. Our history, our literature, our works of art, even our legal code, all testify to the great cultural effect of Christianity and Judaism on our civilization.

Those who are ignorant or ill-informed about the Bible and Christianity can hardly appreciate or judge much English literature (Milton's *Paradise Lost* is an excellent example) and most British history (the nonconformist conscience of the nineteenth century is a classic illustration). They cannot adequately comprehend much of our ceremonial and cult, such as a coronation or the full marriage service. In short, RE helps young people to understand properly our heritage, our artistic inheritance and our society.

RE also provides an opportunity for pupils to understand their feelings better and to deepen their experience of life. If we leave religion out of education altogether, we may find ourselves unconsciously teaching the philosophy that the world is chiefly a place for colonization by technology. In ordinary life we are aware that some experiences are more significant than others: a realization that certain experiences have more meaning than others is raw material for religious education. What is love? What brings real happiness? Why is there suffering? Why help others? Offering pupils a religious interpretation of life as a possibility is one of the values of RE.

Religious education involves moral education and the development of right relationships with other people. Admittedly, moral education is possible without religion, yet there are several important ways in which religion, and in particular Christianity, uniquely contribute to moral development. Moral insight can be gained through a study of the magnificent material found in the Bible and other religious literature. In the outstanding religious leaders, pre-eminently in Jesus of Nazareth, goodness can be seen expressed in human life. Problems of guilt can be dealt with, and motivation to fulfil moral ideals

offered by religious faiths.

The religious instinct to worship has been a part of man's nature ever since his earliest records. Primitive man worshipped various gods; today both civilized and uncivilized men can be found with various rituals, ceremonies and religious rituals. The study of the expression of this aspect of human nature must surely be a valid part of education. An examination of religion inevitably requires a consideration of people—what makes us tick, what influences us to do wrong rather than right, what inspires us to be noble, kind, generous and so on.

An often forgotten value of good religious education is to create in boys and girls a more sensitive understanding of their own beliefs and of the different beliefs by which others govern their lives.

Recently there has been bitter controversy in Birmingham over including in-depth studies of humanism and communism as part of the city's agreed syllabus in religious education. Whatever we may think about this, if we are to achieve the aims of religious education, we must be able to deal with other viewpoints. It has failed. Adolescents, more than adults, can be thoughtless, bigoted and hurtful, and the religious education lesson—especially in a multi-racial community—can be a positive force for good in the school.

The statutory school lesson is the only means of gaining religious knowledge for the majority of young people. Nowadays most children are not brought up to go to Sunday school or church. Vast numbers of pupils gain their only real contact with faith from the religious education teacher. The opportunity to encourage children to at least acquire knowledge and understanding and think seriously about the claims and issues of religions can be no bad thing. The lessons should help youngsters to see what faith and commitment are all about.

The disappearance of compulsory religious education would deprive many children of the chance to make an informed decision

whether to accept or reject religious affirmations and interpretations. The present legislation gives opportunity for choice, not a mere exposure to it. Good religious education must include an adequate and impartial study of other religions and philosophies apart from Christianity. But, as the dominant religion in this country is the Christian faith, it is right and proper that Christianity dominates the syllabus.

It is apparent that the vast majority of parents, teachers and pupils want religious education. Several surveys to test public opinion have been carried out in the past few years, including National Opinion and Gallup polls. All have shown overwhelming support for religious education in state schools, with the exception of one conducted by the British Humanist Association.

The procedure—and therefore the conclusion—of the latter was highly questionable and, in the words of *The Times Educational Supplement*, "the survey does not enhance the cause of the BHA". There may well be poor religious education teaching in some schools, but can any subject be free from similar criticism? There would be no education at all if all subjects which had some poor teachers were abolished. There has been a revolution in religious education in the past 10 years, and curriculum development is a continuous process. Teaching methods are also continually being evaluated. Improvements are being made. Religious education may still be considered the Cinderella subject in state schools, but it is as educationally defensible and viable, if not more so, than some of its ugly sisters.

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14

Festival of festivals

Araminta Wordsworth

on
world cinema

London's film festival is unlike most other such events—entry is by invitation only, not by competition, and there are no prizes or prizes. It is more a festival of festivals for serious movie buffs, who can see the cream of the year's movies, called from Cannes, San Sebastian or wherever, by the indefatigable Ken Wlaschin, the festival's director and his staff.

This year, for the nineteenth IFF, the selection is, as always, wide and eclectic. Those with ambition and the foresight necessary to get hold of tickets could choose from some 60 features from more than 20 countries, among them a strong British and West German contingent. Some of these offerings were strictly curiosities, to be seen as an experiment at festival time and thereafter to disappear unregretted. At the other extreme some festival offerings have been snapped up and are already on show in London: in the time of writing, you could see John Cassavetes' *A Woman Under the Influence*, Werner Herzog's *The King of Kings*, Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Die Ehe der Maria Braun*, Claude Chabrol's *Les Innocents* with Dirty Harry, and Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Fox*.

In between come the mass of festival films, the good and the not so good, the experimental and the relatively straightforward. These are the traditional fare of film societies and small art houses and since there are few outlets in this country it seems in reason that most of these films won't see the light of screen, the more the pity. Among them are the products of new cinemas, the films made by emerging countries often in the Third World.

One swallow, however, does not make a summer. One Dayrushi Mehrjui or Shadi Alhassani does not prove the existence of an Iranian or Egyptian cinema. But this year I am struck by the increased number of films from countries not traditionally regarded as possessing flourishing film industries.

Algeria perhaps is typical. When Gillo Pontecorvo shot his *Battle for Algiers* he made a point of training and using native technicians, thus laying the foundations for Algeria to make their own films. *Chronicle of the Years of Embers* is Mohammed Lakhdar-Hannane's fourth film, and in it he writes, produces and acts as well as directing.

The time-span is wide—Algeria under British rule 1939 and 1953—and the action follows the fortunes of a family of poor farmers, with details based on the director's childhood. The central figure, Miloud (played by the director), takes his family to town after years of drought destroy all chance of crops. Here he comes into collision with the French colonial administration and its petty, pernicious corruption. His family die of typhus, Miloud is conscripted into France's army, but it is only when he returns to Algeria to be treated as badly as before, that he at last rebels.

Chronicle of the Years of Embers is a long film—almost four hours—and framed as a national epic, an explanation for the killings of November, 1953 (which is where Pontecorvo came in). Hannane wanted to show that this uprising had a reason and a past; the film is also a way of instructing his own people, an exercise in the raising of revolutionary consciousness. With so much time to play with, the pace is leisurely and some scenes seem included only for local colour—a pleasure at least for western viewers who will find the sequences in south or north doubly pleasing.

Another revolutionary exercise is Theo Angelopoulos's *The Travelling Players*, the third and most ambitious film of this young Greek director, whose previous work, *The Reconstruction of Days*, of '36, have been shown at earlier festivals. Here we are given a panorama of Greek political history, from the expulsion from Asia Minor in 1922 through the fascist dictatorship of the Metaxas and the British occupation, to the equally fascist dictatorship of the Colonels.

The ostensible performers in this structure are a troupe of actors travelling through southern Greece, performing as they go a romantic-postcard-tragedy, *Galathea*, the *Shepherdess*, the opening lines of which we go to know rather well. The film starts as Elektra (yes, the well-known myth of the house of Atreus is also involved) returns to a town she first visited in 1936, and the action works back and forth from this point.

The members of the troupe are used as mouthpieces for political positions, both of the



A moment
from 'Chronicle of the Years
of Embers'

left and the right; and this time the English under General Scobie are the colonial bullies. Not all is unrelieved drama—there are occasional and welcome moments when humour almost breaks through. A group of Greek Cypriots in a town square (Greece-step in the sound of the hezouki?), British soldiers dance on the beach and a scurrilous billiard speculates on the condition of General Scobie's member. Again this is a long film, 230 minutes, and shot, according to Ken Wlaschin, in a virtuoso 80 takes.

Satyajit Ray can scarcely be considered a new director, but India is definitely a Third World country and so yet few names have emerged from its tawdry, pulchritudinal film industry to challenge his lonely preeminence. In *The Middle Man* he takes a hard, pessimistic look at what it is like to be young in Calcutta today. The hero Somnath (Pran) is a young man who has been driven out of his job and drifts into a life of crime, a small step to becoming a pimp and supplying girls to influential clients in return for money.

After *Distant Thunder*, Ray was accused of being soft, of avoiding the issues, but in this film he produces an indictment of the Indian way of graft and corruption, not the least observed with humour. The director himself enters it as a black comedy and the details are examinations under the nose of the invigilator in its sickly show. The story world of the middle man and other apocryphal composites. "See this man over there," says Somnath's mentor, indicating an inoffensive-looking gentleman. "Eleven companies—all

take." Robt Ghosh is the smooth public relations man turns in a delightful performance, all things to all men for a huge commission. However, the cumulative effect is one of bitterness and anger, that this is all the system can offer to its young graduates, not a very hopeful message.

Cine-productions between European and Third World countries are something of a rarity, and there were two in the festival. Belgium, France and Tunisia joined forces for *The Son of Amir* is a film which takes Pierre Clementi on a *Passe-partout* journey of discovery. Far from home, by Sidiouh Shuhid Solles was financed by West Germany and Iran. This film chronicles a few days in the life of a guest worker, treading a dreary path from mindless repetitive work in a factory to equally isolated time off in a flat full of fellow Turks, preserving their own culture in a sea of Tunisian indifference and, occasionally, open hostility.

Little happens—the old lady in the flat below invites him in for a cup of tea, but he only because she is equally lonely; a flutist goes home because his father has died. The repetition of the daily routine is slightly broken by an attempt to find a prostitute or a walk in the park, and with different cantos angles or views of the same subject, contained within a meandering effect, of this self-obsessed being slowly ground down.

The other Iranian entry I saw could not have been more different. Bohran Behrani's *The Stranger and the Fox* concerns itself with our old friends, illusion and reality. Set in a fishing community it seems to be about a stranger who appears from the sea, marries the local widow but never settles down. Then comes an invasion by black-robed strangers,

a massacre, and the stranger moves out, presumably to repeat the whole process somewhere else. Arty shots and imitations of Kurosawa could not prevent the two hours of this film from being something of a bore.

How unlike the films of the Senegalese director, Ousmane Sembene, whose latest offering *Nala* was shown at the festival. His work is rooted in his national culture, and he produces good entertainment and meaningful films in the same package. *Nala*, which means impotence, satirises the rich bourgeoisie of Dakar while causing western audiences some unease.

An elderly businessman takes a third wife but fails to perform satisfactorily on the wedding night. The film concerns his efforts to restore his failing virility, and in spite of his surface sophistication, he resorts to such doctors. However, when rigour is satisfactorily restored, his wife is unavailing. Sembene also takes the lid off his own life in Dakar, where the new influx of the revealed is to be feared with the return of the rest of the population, and education, while the rest of the population speak Quoulou, here carries his love of things French to such an extreme that he only drinks imported mineral water and washes his car in it.

The humour is broad but none the less effective for that. At the wedding party, the first two wives, one traditional, the other in dark glasses and slinky black dress, sit apart drinking one-cold and feeling like the ghost at Macbeth's banquet. After the disastrous wedding night the mother-in-law desecrates the cockerel to supplement the deficiencies of the marriage sheets.

15 Books

Cats out of bags

Geoffrey Parkinson on family therapy

Families Under Stress. By Tony Manocchlo and William Pettit. Routledge and Kegan Paul £4.95. 0 7100 81766.

The technique of family therapy is now fashionable in professional social work. This is understandable: its basic concepts are stimulating and theoretically persuasive. The disturbed individual is the product of complex environmental factors, the most significant being that of the family. It is thus argued that to treat a client in isolation is rather like dealing with the symptoms of a disease without attacking its root causes. Family therapists, commonly working in pairs, involve themselves with all the members of a household and try to see how diseased systems of communication and non-communication have established themselves.

Tony Manocchlo and William Pettit are both practitioners and vigorous advocates of family therapy and illustrate their ideas by some quite vivid observations on a number of well-known fictional families. We are shown how Hamlet is unlikely to have been helped by a mere interpretation of his Oedipal problems in a "one to one" case-work

situation since almost everyone of any significance within the royal court is involved in the concealment of an appalling secret—murder.

Hamlet, who knows the truth, is confronted by a conspiracy of denial and this, blended with his own vacillations and attitudes of dependency, makes him ripe for the role of scapegoat. The usurping king and his new bride barrage Hamlet with requests to say what is wrong. Hamlet tells them, more or less, but they refuse to hear and merely repeat requests for an answer.

Soon un-communication brings into question the state of Hamlet's mental health. In this respect there is the interesting suggestion that Polonius plays the part of a busy-body social worker who has totally failed to comprehend the true neuro of the noxious in Elsinore.

Amongst the more contemporary family dramas that Manocchlo and Pettit consider are the Tyrone and the Lomans. The Tyrone's belong to Eugene O'Neill's *Dr's Journey into Night*. Each member of this family is anxious for love and yet frightened by the expressions of affection. They have also devised elaborate systems of denial, particularly in re-

lationship to the meaning of disease and death. Willy Loman and his family, from Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, show the problems that arise from juggling with reality and the development of continuing posing paradoxical attitudes (for example stressing the value of honesty yet praising the bravado of the criminal act).

Manocchlo and Pettit are not content merely to investigate the Loman family, they actually try to put them into treatment. We then get the embarrassing spectacle of an imagined dialogue between Miller's characters and a circumlocutory "do gooder" clearly intent upon unearthing the concealment of Willy Loman's family adultery. It is perhaps at this point in the advocacy of family therapy that certain queries arise about the practicalities of the method.

For Manocchlo and Pettit "secrecy" seems to be a fundamental sin in sick marriages. Indeed they see it as a major problem within our society, particularly in the context of the divorce. The diagnosis of terminal illness. Clearly on all this their position has much to commend it; many more people should be told the truth in matters both of life and death. But the truth for everyone

—or any price? Common sense and common custom suggests that "the truth" does not always set men free any more than does the offering of love solve all psychological ills (the psychopath, for example, is rarely "redeemed by love").

Denial can sometimes, perhaps, have positive as well as negative aspects and, if the revelation of Willy Loman's adultery was destined to improve matters, then the authors should have had the courage to extend their dialogue to show how this might be so. Perhaps they feared that the manipulation of Miller's characters was beyond them, but one suspects the reactions of real life clients in a similar situation is likely to be even more elusive to predict. Only the omnipotent would suggest that therapy sessions could always abolish and contain all the turmoil created by such an explosive revelation within a family.

One suspects that Manocchlo and Pettit have failed to recognise fully the problem posed by Lisen in *The Wild Duck*. The character Gregor's blind insistence upon honesty in relationships ultimately leads to the death of a small child. If we are to accept Puhonush's maddash as just parody of traditional case-work methods, then surely Gregor

must stand as a sombre warning to all family therapists.

Other claims in this book reveal haughty attitudes that once distinguished many early, undistinguished psychoanalysts. There is, for example, the suggestion that the complex condition of autism is the result of a psychological defence of withdrawal from fraught family situations; and in the field of treatment Manocchlo and Pettit demand that "no individual would be given treatment on his own unless he was living on his own". Such presumptuousness is the hallmark of a method that has yet to pass through its adolescence.

The diagnostic insights of family therapy are important and no doubt the techniques will find their place in the caring repertoire. However, they have yet to prove in this country that they can move effectively from "verbosifying" middle class families to "non-verbosifying" working class homes. In the field of probation, where the method has been given every opportunity to evolve, there is a suggestion that family therapy techniques are seen as artificial by many of those they are meant to serve. A little humility by Manocchlo and Pettit would better serve their evangelism. Nobody knows all the answers in "do gooder"; human beings are different.

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The 25 books in the Longman Imprint series bear the unmistakable stamp of their general editor Michael Marland, both literally and in more subtle ways—literally in that the lively and inviting covers are each distinguished by a bold oval stamp which seems to emphasize that these are school books, meant to be studied rather than enjoyed. This reflects the distinction Marland makes between "the crazes of

out-of-school-reading and the real exploration of literature", a distinction at once neutral and destructive, and part of a larger, vitriolic dichotomy between school and the pupils' experience of the world outside.

What the teacher needs, writes Marland, is "material for lessons". What such lessons are like, and how they can be run with efficiency and humanity is explained in *The Craft of the Classroom*: the teacher will be caring, loving even (though with a rather kind of love), but he will remain the dominating influence always at the centre of the stage, the indispensable intermediary between the pupil and education.

The assumption that the teacher will almost invariably mediate between the pupil and literature accounts for features that I, and perhaps pupils, find off-putting about this series: the unadmirable "schooliness", the unimaginative lay-out and use of visual material, the difficulty of some of the writing, the arbitrary way in which it is presented, and the uncertainty of tone and language in the notes and suggestions for further work, euphemistically entitled "Points for Discussion", at the end of each volume.

Yet for the teacher prepared to look beyond this, the Imprint series contains by far the best collection of modern literature available for

school use. The range of material is unusually varied. The novels and biographies are accompanied by thoughtful critical commentaries, often of as much use to the teacher as the pupils. The collections of short stories are predominantly by single authors whose themes and practice are considered in some depth; very good readings of stories by Naughton, Sid Chaudhry, Basil Stott and Shirley are provided on record or cassette. Television provides an surprisingly rich source of modern drama—"Z. Cors", "Steeptoe", "Scena" and others—with serious consideration given to the nature and functioning of television drama.

Finally, there are the "Experience" books, which explore the themes of colour (excellent) and work (worthy but duller), and two recent additions *Breaking Away* and *The Experience of Sport*. *Experience of Sport*, *Experience of Work* and *Experience of Colour* are an anthology of short stories, one act plays, poetry, and extracts from novels and biographical writing, based primarily on the idea that "the education of the imagination should be an all-round education of the mind". Their suggestions for further reading, films and records are firmly practical and realistic. They could be an important ingredient in integrated humanities work, as well as a very valuable resource for the English teacher. The material is arranged in arbitrary order and pupils will need guidance if they are to get the most out of them.

John Fuster fulfils a pressing need for material in *The Experience of Sport*, providing vigorous and first-time nerves, with interesting parallels drawn between the different sports. Rugby, football, and athletics seem to produce more exciting writing than the more contemplative sports of fishing and cricket, where the prize tends towards the flowery.

In *Breaking Away* Michael Marland and Marilyn Davies have assembled a first-rate collection of writing which explores the moment when young people break away from their parents, to take up on independent existence and identity. A wide range of experiences is covered, from the bitter and fierce to the sad and painful, and to the touchingly comic. Both the parents' and the young person's points of view are presented. Pupils will be quick to recognise the importance of the theme, and the honesty and power of much of the writing. The tone of the follow-up suggestions is friendly, and more helpful, relating the fictional experience to real life, and providing good ideas for creative writing.

From a mass of material C. E. J. Smith has culled 10 exceptionally good stories. I approached *Ten Western Stories* with some reluctance but in fact most of the stories are Western only in setting, a setting that unleashes "the capabilities

of men and women for good and evil... as they have rarely been before, or elsewhere in human history". Every story is gripping, yet with depth, and should be enjoyed by a wide range of young readers. The historical notes which place the stories in context are excellent. The questions at the end of the book are more of a penance than an inspiration.

The delicacy and subtlety of H. E. Bates's stories in *The Good Corn and Other Stories* make them less accessible to the uninitiated pupil reader; most will need help in getting to grips with them, but they will amply reward the effort, especially in the fifth and sixth forms where the theme, the importance of personal happiness in the ability to establish relationships, will be more readily perceived. Geoffrey Hinson's notes on the author and on the individual stories, sensitively explore the qualities of Bates's style in a fairly high level.

Marland's influence on the series is not just its orientation to class teaching. What also unites the series is the depth and diversity of the literature, imaginatively selected from the best of modern English writing, to suit the needs and abilities of the older secondary school pupil. The teacher who is unacquainted with the series is missing a lot of exciting and stimulating material, whatever his or her methods and approach might be.

MOTHER TONGUE

R. W. Noble on EFL

The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Ten Countries. By E. Glyn Lewis, Carolyn E. Messad, et al. Aldine and Wiley, 1975. 19.20. 0 470 53159 9.

English is the mother tongue for 250 million people; it is a necessary second language for at least 50 million others. For a substantial minority of the world's population, six-sevenths of the world's population, with whom this book is concerned, English is a foreign language that is worth learning for purposes of international communication in work and recreation. The schools in countries such as the Netherlands and Sweden now teach nearly all their students to be competent users of English.

In *The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Ten Countries*, the compilers try to evaluate

statistically the factors that promote and retard achievement. Their ambitious plan for the collection of data was two-pronged: firstly, to test large national samples of 14 year olds and matriculates in the skills of comprehension (reading and listening) and production (speech and writing); then to quiz students, teachers and local officials about teachers' qualifications, methods, motives, pedagogical matters. A feast of data was thus anticipated.

Unfortunately, the fieldwork was only partially carried out, this curtailing the compilers' projected display of statistical bravura. The standardized tests of speech and writing were not taken by students in four key countries—the Netherlands, West Germany, Israel and Thailand. With respect to the other six nations (Chile, Francophone Belgium, Finland, Hungary, Italy and Sweden), there were various gaps in the data about students in one or other of the grades and skills. In gathering answers about school facilities, home influences, students' attitudes and teachers' competence (which were to be correlated with the achievement test results), the restorers also obtained some in-

formation which the Iron stomachs of their computers could not digest. According to one footnote concerning the mix-up on the Swedish questionnaires about parental influence, the gap to the statistical tables was "due to ambiguities in the wording of questions". Because the authors do not publish all the language tests and general questionnaires that they used, the quality of some other data that was collected is difficult to examine.

The published tables of correlations and other calculations, if allowed the foregoing limitations, should assist educational administrators and advisers, as well as teachers who are familiar with statistical analysis. Most of the authors' general calculations support the results of previously published research. Overcoming the interference of the mother tongue is found in all these countries to be a difficult task, but supplying both a comprehensive curriculum and an adequate time-table to put across the contradictions and complexities inherent in English. This survey also confirms the truism that successful learning of English as a foreign language depends on students being highly

motivated, on teachers being competent, and on the allocated periods being conducted entirely in English rather than in the students' mother tongue.

In drawing the more specific deductions that we might hope for—in ascertaining, for example, the impact of using language laboratories or the effect of introducing literary activities—the authors often seem too non-committal or occasionally even misleading. For instance, they emphasize the controversial conclusion about teachers' competence: "the amount of training or travel and residence in an English-speaking country do [sic] not appear to make any particular difference". Before the British Council and educational institutions start cutting the courses that they organize in Britain for overseas teachers of English, they might well look at the wording of the data from which this conclusion purports to stem. The phrasing of the question, and the authors' apparently elicited only the length of their "residence in an English-speaking country".

Common sense seems more dependable than this kind of statistical science. Relatively unsuccessful Italian teachers of English who have often holidayed with

relatives in Italian-American districts of New York could not be expected to gain much professional benefit. By comparison, a successful Swedish teacher who has lived with a local family and pursued a six-month programme of co-teaching classes, theatre outings and library visits in a British university town must have had his competence in English greatly re-enforced.

Nevertheless, this study is often useful, and its tables of statistical analysis lend conviction to several general principles of good language teaching. The prose summaries of these tables, however, should have shown more stylistic strength, even at the risk of stifling the feelings of local educators: "An interesting feature is that only in one country (Thailand) is speaking English taught for the first time later than the grade at which the language is introduced into the curriculum. Nevertheless, though teaching English is taught before speaking, achievement in reading in Thailand does not compare favourably with achievement in those countries which begin with speaking English." In such prose, diplomatic qualifiers are easier to come by than clear-cut distinctions.

Network for participation

NORMAN WILLIS describes the Council for Educational Technology's sector requirements machinery

Because the Council for Educational Technology are a national central organization they are not, nor can they be, close enough to educational institutions to know all the difficulties which confront people as they perform the wide variety of professional tasks which education demands.

Yet, if they are to fulfil their role they must know about the requirements of education and training, so that they can decide which will benefit from the application of educational technology.

For these reasons the council have decided to set up sector requirements machinery—a network of contacts with organizations which represent and are in direct touch with teachers on the job.

The scheme works as follows. The sector requirements committee, drawn from CET members, have invited organizations to join a register of participating bodies. An organization applying for registration states their experience of educational technology, and of education and training. In this way the organizations themselves describe their particular experience and the area on which they can advise. More than 40 organizations are currently included in the register.

The purpose of this network is twofold. It gives a means of answering specific difficulties arising from the council's development programme. It is a channel through which CET proposals can be tested out. The participating bodies can come together to identify the educational difficulties of their own sectors as they relate to the area in which CET have decided to operate. In this way they can participate with the council from the beginning in uncovering major difficulties to which educational technology might be applied, and most particularly in attempting to forecast areas of need before matters become critical.

How will the committee and the participating bodies actually deal with a topic requiring investigation? Whether the topic arises from the CET programme or is brought to the council by the participating bodies, the procedure is the same.

The sector requirements committee discuss the topic and select from the register of participating bodies those organizations who

appear to have experience of, or an interest in it. These organizations are invited to give preliminary information and then attend a special meeting with the members of the sector requirements committee, one of whom would act as chairman.

The aim of these special meetings would be:

- to define as precisely as possible the difficulty
- to agree on action
- to decide on the most appropriate channels through which to take action
- to decide which organization can most effectively undertake that action.

The sector requirements committee and their representatives act as coordinators. Members, who attend the special meeting, report to the full sector requirements committee to ensure that any action the council must take is brought before the appropriate committee. It should be mentioned here that the solution might require action by some other organization.

Two subjects have been tackled so far. The first, concerning training for employment and information on the use of teaching techniques and materials. Questions like "Who has done? Where? In what circumstances? With what materials?"

Information can already be obtained from different sources, but there are gaps, and coordination could be better. A formal investigation will be carried out by BACIE next year, sponsored by CET and the Training Services Agency.

The second subject arose from the council's programme—an investigation into the need for non-teaching support staff in educational technology. Preliminary collection of information has shown the effort which participating bodies are prepared to put into their collaboration with the council. The preliminary findings have been analysed and will be discussed at special meetings early next year.

To encourage participating bodies to actively advise the council, a series of one-day conferences of sector groups of organizations are being planned. These will be preceded by a conference of all participating bodies, probably next March, to discuss how the network can function as effectively as possible.

*The first register has recently been printed. Copies are available from the register of participating bodies those organizations who



A new BBC publication, *Projects*, looks like a Christmas annual and claims to be "a supermarket of ideas, information, quizzes, games and things to make and do" on scientific subjects. There appears to be enough in it to keep a bright 10 to 14-year-old occupied for some hours.

The eight topics cover under biology and physics, but are generally presented attractively enough to appeal to children who are diffident about science. Topics include astronomy and space, photography,

consumer choice and an unusual one, "Babies and Young Children", which could be helpful to older children, both as brothers and sisters and potential parents. Chapters are usually introduced with basic information and continue through quizzes to actually making something. Most of the information is practical and some of it is essential: electricity safety, for example, which is explained in a few cartoon pages.

The instructions for things to make vary both in difficulty and

interest. They include a fairly standard kite, a simple astro-telescope and even a wringing box-camera. These are fun and have obvious uses, but it is hard to imagine that many children will want to make an electronic flip-flip without knowing what it will do when finished, or spend time on a dreary smoking machine. The "scientist", by the way, does not smoke the cigarette. Another slight irritation is that the graphics are often more fashionable than clear.

Project: BBC Publications. £1.35.

Understanding handicap

Action Research for the crippled child are planning a range of resources material. It is hoped that this will help children to understand more about the causes of disabling diseases, and encourage them to think about community responsibility and possible mechanical aids.

At the moment Action Research have twelve filmstrips and a schools information pack. The filmstrips are grouped under the subject headings of biology, social studies and history, and they are recommended for senior secondary school use. The pack contains project leaflets, a wallchart, and teachers notes and is suitable for about 8 to 14-year-olds.

The filmstrips are available for preview or purchase, the pack costs £2.75 plus postage and VAT, all from the National Audio Visual Aids Library, Paxton Place, Gipsy Road, London SE27 9SR.

The Financial Times has joined Waterlow Ltd to produce cassettes on financial and legal subjects. The talks have been prepared and given by specialists, and run for 30 minutes on each of the two tracks. Cassettes available are *The Company Transfer Tax*, by Professor G. S. A. Wheatcraft, the *Employment Protection Bill*, by Professor Roger Riddout, the *Consumer Credit Act*, by Professor Aubrey Diamond, and *Up to Date Motoring Law*, by John M. Wickerton.

During December more cassettes will be added to the list: *Infiniton*

Accounting, by Professor Walter Reid, the *Community Land Act*, by Sir Desmond Heap, and two on the Rent Acts.

Cassettes to cover development land tax, development gains tax, health and safety at work and contracts of employment are under discussion. All cassettes are probably most suitable for sixth forms and upwards.

Information can be obtained from: Professional Services Division Waterlow (London) Ltd, Halywell House, Worship Street, London, EC2A 2BN.



A new booklet on road safety for children of six and over is now available from BP. Crossing the Road safely contains 18 pages of simple line drawings which can be coloured in.

Each picture has a simple question such as "Can you see a safe place to cross? Put a big X at a safe place to cross." The final

question is a jumble of the Green Cross Code, which must be put in order. The booklet, at 30p per pack of 10, is 50p for postage and packing. It is available from local authority Road Safety Offices or from BP Educational Service, P.O. Box 5, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, LS23 7EH.

Mentmore Manufacturing Co Ltd, Platinium House, Six Hills Way, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 2AY.

Platinium have produced a new adhesive which they claim washes out of clothes easily. Called "School-Aid", it will stick paper and light board. 114 cc (4oz) bottle costs about 25p.

Project: BBC Publications. £1.35.

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A new look at the stars

by Peta Levi

A new series of programmes to suit all ages at the London Planetarium have been devised by its director, John Ebdon.

Three of the four talks are new, containing more information, but presented in Ebdon's interesting and amusing manner.

The programme I enjoyed most, "What in Heaven", traces the history of astronomy from its beginnings in Mesopotamia around 400 BC, and shows how knowledge of the universe has developed through man's ingenuity led by astronomers and philosophers from Aristotle to Copernicus, Galileo and Herschel.

In "Reverie for the Moon" man on his planet earth is considered in relation to the vastness of the universe. Ebdon presents an imaginative opening with a conversation between father and child from another planet and answers such questions as "Can the boundaries of the universe ever be determined?" "Is what we see in the sky really there?" "And will it always be there?" He quotes Sir Bernard Lovell—"It may be possible to look towards the constellation of Coma, hold a penny at arm's length and remember your obscure dream of a cluster of a thousand galaxies 350 million light-years away."

In "Journey through the Night" under the clear skies and unlimited horizons of the planetarium, we are taken from London dusk to the South Pole, to look at some of the 88 constellations with which the skies of the world are patterned.

A cloud projector and horizon projectors (the first in this country to have been installed at the planetarium). Horizon projectors make it possible to show six different sky scenes (I found the lunar panorama most dramatic); an improvement on the previous unchanging panorama of London's rooftops.

The London Planetarium, Marble Arch Road, London, NW1, is open every day except Christmas Day and Sundays. Programmes start on the hour from 11 am-5 pm. Adults 50p, children under 16 30p.

Students were asked to decide which poem in each pair they (a) liked better; (b) thought technically more proficient. If they recognized a poem or if they could not make up their minds, they were asked to "pass". They did not have to give reasons for their choice.

In the total result, 26 votes were distributed among the anonymous poems, 41 against 72 for the unknown. Forty-one replies voted the unknown more proficient and 33 the unknown.

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What's in a name?

Norman Hidden

Reputation, wrote Hazlitt, runs in a vicious circle, and merit limps behind it, modified and abashed at its own insignificance. This was true of the literary world in 1911 and it would still seem to produce its effects today.

The rubric to the Certificate of Education (English) Examination of the University of London Institute of Education proclaims a fearsome warning: "Candidates are strongly advised to meet each passage on its own merits and NOT to allow the significance of its origin to dictate their response to or their judgment of it."

When invited to read some poems as a consequence of English teachers, I deliberately chose those by authors as yet unknown but whose names I withheld. It was with satisfaction that I realized I was securing from them a full attention and a willingness to give a favourable response which these unknown poets had not enjoyed when they appeared, with their names appended, in the pages of *New Poetry* magazine.

A certain amount of experimentation thereafter with friends and acquaintances resulted in the observation that where authors' names are well known there is clearly a readiness to look deeply into the nature of the poems, to dig for merits; the critical faculty has, as it were, been alerted into full speculative awareness. Where the name carries no reputation there is no alerting and the reaction is correspondingly superficial.

These observations seemed to suggest that the Institute of Education's warning rubric was there for a purpose. It was necessary, however, to devise some kind of more objective test.

This was first undertaken with a class of students in a college of education. They were given a duplicated sheet with four pairs of anonymous poems printed side by side. All the poems had been chosen from issues of *New Poetry*.

One in each pair had been written by a well-known contemporary poet (Adrian Henri, Thom Gunn, Elizabeth Jennings, Wolf Mankowitz) and the other an unheard-of poet. As far as possible the poems chosen made no appeal to the eye: they had no subject-matter or formal structure in common.

Students were asked to decide which poem in each pair they (a) liked better; (b) thought technically more proficient. If they recognized a poem or if they could not make up their minds, they were asked to "pass". They did not have to give reasons for their choice.

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Adrian Henri—and friend—is he read on merit, or on his reputation?

nically proficient?" was eliminated. Replies by students in the earlier tests had seemed often to contradict their vote of "liked best", and such votes seemed a possible way of hedging or, perhaps, of indicating a "hard luck good try" comment on the poem they liked less. It seemed a reasonable supposition that a more mature audience could combine and integrate these aspects to a single preference.

Result: 53 votes for the known poets and 63 for the unknown—a remarkable similarity to the "liked better" response at the second and impartial college.

It seems clear from these results that when the author of a poem is not identified, either readers' critical faculties are thrown into disarray (is it just possible?) or the

tortoise merit overtakes the hare reputation (running still in those repetitive circles).

Even though unknown poets can on occasion write poems which bear favourable comparison with the work of established poets, the latter have usually gained their reputations because they are able consistently to produce competent/good poems. It would be absurd to suggest that unknown poets write well and known poets indifferently all the time. But I suggest that upon judgment of individual poems, and that Hazlitt's "vicious circle" operates in a way that crushes the merit of many current practitioners to be underestimation.

Norman Hidden is a poet, and runs the Workshop Press.

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TALKBACK

Ideas, argument, experiences, research

Students' discrimination in responding to poetry/Girls' preferences for higher education

pect, more grammar school sixth-formers wanted higher education than those in the comprehensive. However, of the grammar school pupils, we noted to begin with more girls preferred higher education to immediate employment. This seems to run counter to the commonly accepted view that HE is male-dominated. While this result may be because of differences in the way schools affect their pupils' expectations, we have no reason to believe this is the case.

A further analysis of our results shows other differences between the sexes. Both boys and girls with O level passes of nine or more wanted to continue their education (predominantly at university), but a discrepancy occurs at the lower level of the GCE success range. When pupils with six or fewer O levels are asked their intentions, considerably greater percentages of girls indicate their desire to continue with further study. Similar results were obtained from the comprehensive school. It is this lower range that accounts for the greater number of girls wishing to follow HE.

Most of our study was concerned with the forces which influence choice of future educational establishment—forces such as academic performance, knowledge of national and local institutions and courses, perceived status of institution, and so on. In our main sample of grammar school pupils, only half as many girls as boys expected to follow degree courses. Taken across the whole range of O levels, girls were significantly more likely than boys to opt for teaching courses in education colleges.

If thwarted in their attempt to enter into the institution of their first choice, less than half the boys remained steadfast in their intention to follow a full-time education course. One third would go on to employment with part-time education as an integral part, and a quarter would go straight into a job. Most girls chose alternatives, such as education colleges. Few opted for work. So while on the whole girls tend to apply for less "prestigious" courses and institutions, they remain firm in their desire at least to go into HE of one kind or another, whatever their actual educational attainment at school.

No data was collected on the possible reasons for these differences. One can speculate, however. Education colleges play a major role in girls' education (presumably because of the long and short run advantages of the teaching profession for women). As we discovered, and as can be seen from sex ratios in these colleges, they are considered predominantly a female preserve by male sixth-formers. This, and their relatively low requirements for entry (in terms of formal qualifications), explains the greater number of less well-qualified girls intending to continue.

But why are girls more enthusiastic than boys to go on to HE? It could be argued that job opportunities are still heavily loaded in favour of men. The attempt to gain paper qualifications at all costs represents a realistic appraisal of life-chances without them. This can be illustrated by the fact that the sixth-formers actually hoped to do, and how far their final choices are pragmatic solutions.

Some light is thrown on this by a pilot study we conducted on sixth-formers' intentions. This focused on three Northamptonshire schools: a boys' grammar, a girls' grammar and a small mixed, creamed comprehensive. The sixth-formers were given questionnaires and asked to indicate their intentions for post-school careers. The questionnaire was designed to show the degree of commitment to their particular choice of HE. As one might ex-

Whatever the reasons, it is clear that the closure of many colleges of education and the proposed cut-backs in teacher training will mean that many sixth-form girls will have to alter radically their intentions to bring them into line with the so-called "needs" of society.

Robin Smith and John Vale teach at New College of Education, Northampton.

Music From The Schools Prom

The Times Educational Supplement is producing a longplaying record album of the first ever Schools Prom.

The album, which will consist of two records, features music—recorded live at The Albert Hall—by all twelve groups which took part.

The double record album is available from Times Newspapers at £3.75 incl. postage and package. Orders and enquiries should be sent to Shirley Green, The Times Educational Supplement, Room 266, P.O. Box 7, New Printing House Square, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ. Payment should accompany the order and be payable to Times Newspapers Limited.

PLEASE ALLOW 28 DAYS FOR DELIVERY

[illegible]



Hello, Taylor

Last week the good ship *Quincy* sailed up the Thames to Richmond, where a dozen of its crew disembarked to talk to the natives about how they managed and governed their schools. Captain Tom Taylor and his men (and women) have already docked at Carnarvon Bay, Humberston and the Isle of Wight, and there have also been island expeditions to Sheffield, Bedford and Ealing.

They were welcomed by Joan Sallis, a Richmond member of the Taylor Committee, who said she hoped her old friends would spin some yarns to her about the school government. But this was too jolly a way of carrying on for the local NUT officer, Norman Radley, who suggested they should have a proper meeting, at which motions on proper representation could be moved. Tom Taylor explained diplomatically that they could get that sort of thing elsewhere; he and his officers preferred individual stories to official resolutions.

Tales there were a plenty. Just over a year ago the thorough wide-eyed representation on its school managing bodies. Teachers and parents were elected by their own kind; political appointments other than councillors were stopped; all bodies could co-opt members of the community interested in education.

In certain schools this change has brought some little local difficulties. One parent complained of harassment by a fellow manager, a prominent councillor who had tried to prevent him from mobilising parents to protest against their cuts last spring. Another governor spoke bitterly of the occasion when the representatives for his school were told by councillors that the governing body could only nominate their chairman from one particular political party.

From other less dramatic accounts, it was clear that much positive and constructive work was going on. Non-attendance at meetings for the first full year had been low, only 11 per cent across 70 schools. Some parents and teachers had obviously learnt the procedural ropes fast, and steered discussion round to curriculum and control issues. Others were still tentative about their role, uncertain about their ability to influence any-

thing more than the capitation allowance at the state of the toilet.

Afterwards, over the nine pies and instant coffee, members of the committee carried out some more informal fact-finding. Aristides, wearing his managerial hat, answered some probing and pertinent questions from Councillor P. O. Fulton, Cerebral's education committee chairman. The conversation dealt up quickly when, clanking to a journalist's hat, Aristides invited him to return the compliment.

Not that Tom Taylor was any more specific about the Richmond evening. "Yes, it was a good meeting," he said this week, "and certainly one that was useful to my committee. I'm sorry I can't say more." Further details must await the *Quincy's* final voyage, when the captain takes her up to Westminster to hand in the log book next September.

Tawney lives

Some pleasant frankness about an old chairman from Sir William Pile, the DES permanent secretary, on Monday. Yes, he told Miss Janet Fookes MP and the select committee on expenditure, he had sent his children (one son, two daughters) to public schools. But that was 15 years ago, and he was not sure if he could afford to pay today's fees.

Times had changed. His neighbours (in stockbroker belt Sevenoaks, Kent) were now sending their children to state schools and were finding they were getting a good deal. Quite a lot of high ranking DES officials also now sent their children to state schools. Those who did not, felt no embarrassment about admitting it. It had no effect on their ability to carry out Government policy.

Maybe not in a formal way. But it seems that the Tawney maxim still holds true—those that make the plans do not experience the results.

Stalking in the undergrowth

While people discuss the idea of an open college in broad general terms and shelve it as something lovely to do when we are rich, the National Extension College, pioneer of the Open University, are getting on with their plans.

The longest standing of Bernet College of Further Education, is four years old and has about 150 of the NEC's correspondence students on 12 courses. These vary from the NEC's course for people taking up serious study after a long gap, to Open University preparatory courses. Students pay much less if they take the course through the college because of the subsidised fees—about £7.50 for a year com-

pared with up to £25 for NEC correspondence courses. The NEC simply sell the course materials to the college who then use their own tutors.

The other two projects are in an embryonic state. At Sutton College of Liberal Arts, the first Saturday meeting—a conference on returning to study—took place this month. It was attended by 32 NEC correspondence students and a DES inspector from the Department of Education and Science.

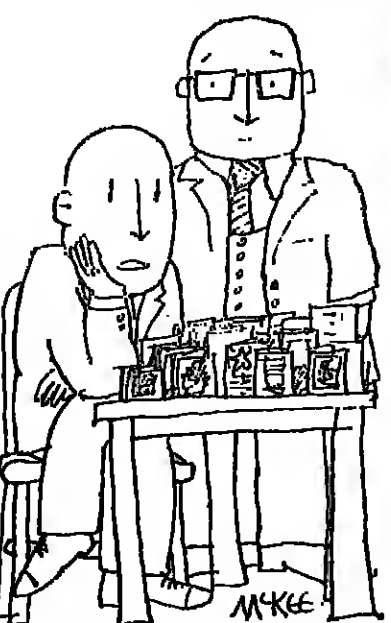
Sutton College is the non-vocational and mature students' part of the Sutton adult education service and has a full-time staff of nine and a part-time staff of about 500. Among them are plenty of people who would like to do more teaching, says the principal, Peter Butten. He can therefore run the same sort of courses in South London as Open provides in north of the Thames, though the aim is to see that they do not conflict.

At Kensington Institute of Adult Education, there are not enough students to warrant starting classes, but they hope to do so in January. Here, too, they will concentrate on Saturday classes once a month. They are offering four NEC courses—on how to study effectively, writing for everyone, man in society and reading to learn. The last two are mainly used by students preparing for the Open University.

As an institute of adult education, Kensington is limited to non-examination subjects, since in the ILEA all examination subjects are taught in colleges. This means that unless Barnes and Sutton, they will not be working with the NEC on GCE courses. But R. P. Howard, the institute's principal, is keen to extend the institute's academic range by providing general courses which go beyond the large amount of work they already do in basic literacy. The link with the NEC could provide not only the materials but also a useful form of validation.

Meanwhile the NEC are discussing plans for South Devon, Leeds, Birmingham and Bristol, with the long-term aim of setting up a national network of centres offering correspondence studies on occasional Saturday classes. Much depends on the goodwill of local authorities who are prepared to allow this development within the existing adult education provision. It also depends on finding tutors who have some experience of correspondence tutoring.

If such a network is established, one pilot for an open college is broadcasting. The NEC organise gateway courses for the Open University and in the first two years the BBC ran broadcasts to go with them. Since then there has been nothing and such discussions as go on are rather vague and limited to things which might fit into general further education programming.



"A pair of increased postage, a record number of pupils send me cards—all without stamps."

Deathcap warning

Pre-Christmas morning: In September IPC put out a warning about their Look and Learn Ninth Book of the Wonders of Nature issued on August 21. The book was withdrawn a week later when it was discovered that two children had been transported so that the death cap toadstool was described as harmless whereas in fact it is almost always fatal if eaten.

Unfortunately, about three and a half thousand copies of the book are still unaccounted for. If anyone has one they should return it to the bookseller they bought it from or the case of difficulties to IPC. The full money will be refunded regardless of the state of the book. All copies are being destroyed and the whole annual cancelled—which means a total loss amounting to thousands of pounds for IPC. Information: IPC, Fleetway Animals Department, Carlton House, 68 Great Queen Street, London WC2.

Cuts corner

Buckinghamshire was this week's cuts corner winner with their Scrabble disclosure not to serve Christmas dinners of turkey and plum pudding in schools this year.

That the cash saved is reported to be enough to pay at least two teachers salaries next year does raise the question of whatever they are going to give the children to eat that day instead.

Aristides



Life, as you know, is full of surprises. And that, believe me, gentle reader, goes for education, too. There was I clinging down the years in the proud boast that what ever might be wrong with our system we still had the best primary schools in the world. Then along comes the William Tyndale Junior School to give me second thoughts and along, too, comes Peter Wilby in the *Quincy* to be surprised at what has been going on. "We don't know," he points out, "how to run our transport system, our social services, our clinics or our economy. Is it, then, any matter for surprise that we don't know how to run our schools?"

Well that, I suppose, is one way of looking at things though I doubt if it would have satisfied old Jimmy Potter. He was my headmaster in the days when my primary school was still elementary. He clearly thought that I should be surprised that I should be surprised at what has been going on. "We don't know," he points out, "how to run our transport system, our social services, our clinics or our economy. Is it, then, any matter for surprise that we don't know how to run our schools?"

Asking for schools to return to the traditional certainties of 40 years ago is like asking for the ramblings to be put back on the Old Kent Road. Teaching nothing but the basic skills, with a few snippets of general knowledge, long ceased to be an adequate basis for an education system.

In a primitive society, lighting fires and hunting are almost the only necessary skills and every one needs them. In an advanced society of rapid change, children have to learn how to acquire new skills, how to track down and evaluate information, how to make choices and decisions, how to identify and develop their own talents so that they can find their places in a highly differentiated labour system.

I must confess that at that point in Mr Wilby's article I found myself going back, not for the first time, to something that Matthew Arnold wrote in his *General Report of the Elementary Schools for the year 1878*. I make no apology for repeating it here:

Our schools deal with children of from four to 13 years of age. We should constantly have the thought present to our minds, and the more so, the more our system of primary schools becomes a great and complicated state and attracts the attention of a number of ingenious and active-minded persons. Our system may be highly complicated, but it is educationists, as they call themselves, who are interested in it. It may be highly ingenious, but the matter in hand is, after all, the instruction of children between the ages of four and 13. This is a plain and simple affair, and the more we complicate ourselves to conceive and treat it as such, the better.

Fortified by Matthew Arnold, I returned to Mr Wilby. After the glimpse he had given us of all the tasks that face the modern school, I was not, I confess, prepared for his assurance that the most fundamental principle of modern education remains the same: that after all, we must teach the child to read. That, after all, we must teach the child to read. That, after all, we must teach the child to read. That, after all, we must teach the child to read.

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Edward Mayer

THE TIMES Educational Supplement

FRIDAY DECEMBER 26 1975 NUMBER 3160

Only 307 shopping days to Christmas

Hardly through, Fortescue. Pity the office party got out of hand. I knew it was a mistake to let the red hiddy run out a quarter of an hour before the guests arrived. Those boys from the Think Tank...

"Only superficial damage, sir. Fortunately I'd locked up the paper clips..."

"Mind you, Fortescue—after 20 years in politics, I'm still a child at heart. I always enjoy these Christmas festivities. I thought Terence Miller was excellent in *Little Red Riding Hood* at the North London Poly. The wolf was good, too."

"...And hidden the Grip-fix..."

"The Ministry of Defence put on *The Yeoman of the Guard*—it hit this year, I thought. Half the chorus went in the defence cuts..."

"I heard the DHSS were doing an emergencies-only version of *Parents...*"

"No matter, sir. Your sandwiches for the journey are in your red box in case you are hi-jacked."

"Thank you, Fortescue. You think of everything. I can certainly say that we are all in excellent health after a few turbulent weeks, culminating in that nasty Chrysler affair. What kind are they?"

"Fish Paste, sir."

"My favourite. It would be very distinguished to be made a hostage. I must discuss it with my European colleagues, and see if this could be arranged. Where was I?"

"Chrysler, sir."

"Yes, of course. There was a real risk of losing jobs in Scotland."

"Not to mention a few in the Cabinet, I gather."

"You mustn't believe everything you read in the papers, Fortescue."

"Harold was wonderful. He worked out a rota. We all take it in turns to resign and then withdraw our resignation in response to Mr man-to-man plea. He's just waiting for Reg's turn to come up."

"How ingenious, sir."

"Just part of the ordinary cut and thrust of Cabinet government, Fortescue."

"More cut than thrust just now, it seems."

"Well, anyway—thank goodness it's over. You know, I really came out of the expenditure review very well. They never noticed I still had my gold watch. They even forgot to make me turn out my pockets..."

"Did you say well, sir?"

"...Not that they'd have found very much: there's an old trick I learned of Whitwick, keep your reserve bus fare sewn into the lining of your jacket..."

"What with a standstill..."

"Certainly we've done well, Fortescue. Half a billion pounds isn't very much if you say it quickly with a cold in your nose. It'll take three years to be fully effective, and who knows who'll be Minister then? Might be Tony Crosland or even the Member for Chelmsford."

"...and a loss of 20,000 teachers' jobs?"

"But not in Scotland, Fortescue."

"I don't quite understand, Secretary of State. Why is it good to have 20,000 people making cars that nobody will buy, and bad to have 20,000 teachers and nurses whom everybody wants?"

"Really, Fortescue, you don't listen. If those Linwood car workers could be turned into Strathclyde teachers there'd be no trouble. But they can't. So we must pay them to make cars to compete against British Leyland."

"But I thought British Leyland was backed by the National Enterprise Board."

"Quite right, Fortescue. But being nationalized, British Leyland can't make a profit, so nobody need lose his job. We can build up Chrysler for Mr Riccardo at the expense of Lord Ryder."

"I thought we were building up them both at the expense of the NUT."

"Too much Tory propaganda. That's your trouble."

"There's just one last piece of cheerful news. The Headmasters' Conference have elected you as their patron."

"Who, me?"

"Yes, sir, they say you've founded more independent grammar schools this year than anyone since Henry VI."

"Well, I do think that's kind."

"Mrs Thatcher used to say that it was little things like that which made it all worth while."

"Quite so, Fortescue. I shall now face 1976 with fortitude and resignation..."

"Did you say resignation, sir?"

No comment

While the teacher and parent understand the importance of sand in play, the teacher understands why both wet and dry sand contribute to the child's development. The teacher should be provided on different days with sand, and the teacher should be provided on different days with sand.



More fun and games at William Tyndale—but the fun really is fun and the games are all to do with it being Christmas.

This is the end-of-term party at the infants school, where life has carried on largely unaffected by the inquiry into events at the junior school.

Report on week eight of the inquiry, page 3



Bill aimed at rebel I.e.a.s

No selection and fully comprehensive schools are demanded in the Government's Education Bill published last week.

Not employers' job to bridge gap

Employers reject a plan for special courses to bridge the gap between school and work. It is not their job, they say, to make up for low standards in schools. This emerged at a BACIE conference in London.

Workshop for handicapped

An industrial unit for ESN and handicapped children in Uxbridge will improve employment prospects. Jane Feltham reports.

Culture feast

Victoria Radin offers a new slant on the history of holidays, Bernard Denby looks at the cultural significance of cigarette packets; Peter Levi on Spanish art, Peter Penning on a variety of school plays, Christopher Griffin-Beale on an exhibition of the work of Maurice Sandak.

Praise for Petrushka

Michael Chubb on the importance of our penchant for nostalgia, and on the origins of two Daghilev ballets which have recently been revived at Covent Garden.

And a partridge in a pear tree...

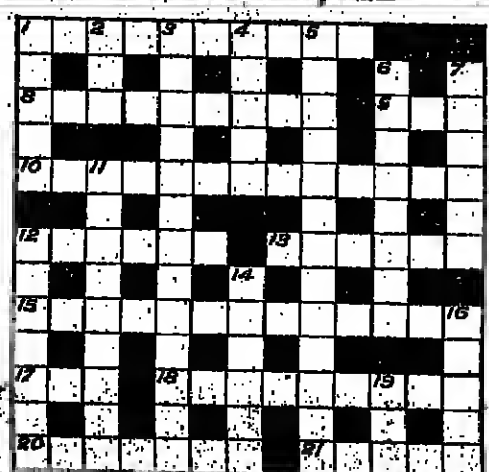
Aristides, with the help of cartoonist David McKee, is handing out Christmas presents. What's on the Christmas tree for Mr Mulley, Norman St. John-Stevens, the NUT, John Valzey and many others.

Science, page 8
The importance of getting nuclear power into our industries is discussed by John Mairdax.
Foreign, page 6
United States: needs of the poor; new row over Boston busing; France: boost for our series.
Letters, page 7
Mistake for NUS leaders; NUT and teachers' morals; furniture designs; early retirement; economy measures. Features, page 9.11

Jeremy Butler on Louis Alexander; Adeline Hartcup on gypsy literacy; pictures from "Problem in the City" exhibition.
Books, pages 13, 14.
Ellen Barker on "relative" knowledge, John Eggleston on Eric Moten, Anthony Frew on philosophers and education; mathematics textbooks. Resources, pages 15, 16
Paul McGon on Programme Fayre; reviews of materials for Third World studies; M. J. Clark on filmstrips on the United States.
Book review competition winners! Christmas in school.
Leaders, page 2; Personal Column, page 4; In brief, page 8; Sport, page 8; Aristides, page 24; Buckley, crossword, chess, page 24.

Classified ad index

Crossword No 1,012



Across

- The bear kind of design for your record player? (10).
- Musical activity may be just a chore to a distracted artist? (9).
- Accented by the modernists when old? (8).
- High horticulture for those who have no grounds for development? (4, 9).
- Queensdown, Canada? (6).

Down

- Initially a communal life for us all? (5).
- CMXCIX is the number to ring for it? (9, 4).
- Unclassified coach? (5).
- Villa on the Costa del Sol? (8).
- No way to name Arab or Hindu? (8).
- Ancient holy man put on show? (6).
- Is gastric turns from such debauchery? (9).
- Basic know how for the chef? (7).
- Woodworking printer? (6).
- Difficult perhaps in mounting of speaking? (5).
- Ben Adhom's name? (3).
- Adhom's name? (3).

Bridge

Bidding against the odds

In the writer of systems designed to keep partners out of trouble when their contract is dependant on trump distribution, we are apt to forget that bridge is in essence a gambling game because much of the speculative element has disappeared from tournament play. Most competitors have learnt how aults are likely to be divided, but they obtain precise information only when there has been bidding by both sides on pre-arranged values. So they tend to be guided strictly by mathematical probabilities which, in the slam zone, are of paramount importance.

With nine trumps, headed by the ace king, between two hands, a declarer risks a game contract which he knows to depend on the four missing trumps splitting 2-2, but he is unlikely to attempt a grand slam even if he has every ace and king, when it hangs on this even distribution. Experience soon convinces him that an even number of missing cards divide unevenly. Four cards break 2-2 only 90 per cent of the time, their most probable division is 3-1, 30 per cent, while the least probable, 4-0, is a mere 10 per cent.

Where I used to obtain satisfaction from obtaining a large score by ignoring the laws of probability, I now feel slightly ashamed of a suc-

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Where I used to obtain satisfaction from obtaining a large score by ignoring the laws of probability, I now feel slightly ashamed of a suc-

cessful gamble where the odds are not in my favour. I have no desire to speculate in a grand slam which is not a better than two to one chance, but I was recently trampled after having opened vulnerable on a minimum. My partner had no means of ascertaining whether I held the queen of my suit on which the contract might have hung; fortunately for me, her instinct was superior to her knowledge.

North South game; dealer East.

Fortified by Matthew Arnold, I returned to Mr Wilby. After the glimpse he had given us of all the tasks that face the modern school, I was not, I confess, prepared for his assurance that the most fundamental principle of modern education remains the same: that after all, we must teach the child to read. That, after all, we must teach the child to read. That, after all, we must teach the child to read. That, after all, we must teach the child to read.

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Edward Mayer



EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT
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Steam-roller tactics

Mr Mulley's Education Bill follows the main lines of that introduced shortly five years ago. It begins by laying down the comprehensive principle, and then goes on to place a duty on L.E.A.s to submit plans designed to make their schemes of secondary education conform to it. It is lighter than Mr Short's Bill because it leaves the voluntary schools into the net. The Secretary of State's powers would be extended to permit him to require governors of voluntary schools to submit proposals. And they, like the L.E.A.s, will be required to take local unacceptance schemes if the Secretary of State so directs, and tailor them "to fit" such conditions as he may specify with respect to any matter in relation to which the previous proposals were in his opinion unsatisfactory.

In the House of Commons recently, Mr Mulley tried to play down the magnitude of the powers he was taking, and in particular to deny any intention to substitute his own schemes for those submitted by local authorities. He even suggested that his power to amend submitted schemes would not be materially different from the powers now exercised by the Secretary of State, who sometimes attached conditions to the approval of reorganization schemes. Mr Mulley's benignness, is interesting and does him credit but is entirely unconvincing. The words of the statute are what count, and they are unambiguously strong. The powers so created will not reside in Mr Mulley personally, but in his office. By the time this rod has been thoroughly picked, Mr Mulley may have left the educational scene. It would be an irony if the first Secretary of State to throw his weight about under this

new act were Mr Norman St John Stevas, though even he would be tied to some sort of comprehensive principle until or unless the act is repealed.

What may be called the Ashley Bramall clause has been carried over from the 1970 Bill. It adds to special schools, selective schools specializing in music and dancing will continue to be permitted. But whereas the 1970 Bill expressly permitted the idea of sixth-form colleges and units which revolved on the basis of ability and aptitude, the present Bill makes no special reference to sixth-form arrangements. This no doubt will be tested by L.E.A.s when the time comes to submit schemes; but it looks as if the discretionary powers of the Secretary will be so great that he alone will decide what does or does not conform to the comprehensive principle.

There is the expected clause requiring L.E.A.s to get DES approval of plans for taking up places at independent schools—a form of coercion required to make the Bill effective at a time when the phasing out of direct grant schools has helped to polarize local opinion.

The Bill marks another big step forward in the centralization of education which must dismay even those who share Mr Mulley's conviction that it is too early for selection into separate institutions on grounds of academic aptitude. It is thus an ironic sequel to a local government reorganization which was intended to produce stronger local authorities. This latest move towards centralization makes nonsense of any parallel talk of devolution to English regions. And all this to crank up an engine to steamroller seven Tory L.E.A.s.

Eric Hawkins

side by side with quite insignificant little stations. I could also see some important provincial establishments like Rugby and, of course, presiding over the whole meeting was this very president, the master of Paddington.

The latter was a formidable figure and when, in due course, he was called to give the presidential address he was received with rapture by the assembled masters. In particular the applause grew deafening whenever he criticized the Government which was guilty, it appeared, of neglecting the railways. Into the twentieth century. It was obviously an article of faith with the masters that the shape of British Railways had been laid up in Heaven in the nineteenth century in the age of steam and that anybody who laid hands on the stations was motivated by, or at least was dangerously flirting with, an evil dogma called democracy.

After the presidential address there was a somewhat confused debate on a motion for the immediate establishment of single-sex trains, and even an amendment (which was seconded) in favour of single-sex stations. The supporters of the motion wondered how the motion would have been blind for so long to the physiological differences between men and women which made it inappropriate for them to undertake this journey together. Against this it was suggested that the content of the station booklets now days made it difficult for even the most preoccupied traveller not to perceive the considerable, and to some most welcome, differences; but this intervention was judged irrelevant in a serious discussion.

The debate was curtailed to make time for the main resolution to be moved by the president himself. This motion roused the master's intense interest. It was nothing less than the proposal that every station in the land should erect in the

Letters to the Editor

Daft deadline on 16-plus

Sir—The Schools Council has published its promised document on examinations at 16 plus, *Proposals for the Future*. Accompanied by suitable publicity and instant opinion from the press it was launched months ago. As is now quite usual, comment was invited from all concerned with a deadline set for February 29, 1976. Subject associations received a single copy at their headquarters and members could study a copy because all schools would also be supplied. (We all face financial difficulties and, after all, public money is involved.) Other copies would have to be purchased. The whole document is copyright.

So far, so good. The timing was tight, later than previous schedules indicated, but not completely impossible. At least our members might secure a view of the document fairly quickly if informed of its imminent presence in school. Notes appeared in bulletins and newsletters, those interested were alerted. But the document did not appear, and at the time of writing still remains in limbo.

Now we hear via press reports that the time limit has been extended by one month. But schools are still without their copies and Christmas is upon us. Reasoned comment from those most involved cannot possibly be returned inside even the new deadline. By luck, some subject associations with fortunate meeting dates have been able to respond. (This merely illustrates one circumstance of Schools Council co-operation with these bodies.)

This is not general and a considerable extension of the time limit for reception of opinion is not only justified but necessary. My 1, through your columns, add the voice of subject teaching associations to appeal for more time?

DERRICK GRADY,
Chairman,
Council of Subject
Teaching Associations.

Waste of time and money

Sir—Without a doubt, in-service courses for teachers are very useful and it is gratifying that some of our universities and colleges of education are offering BEd, MEd, and MA in education courses to serving teachers.

What is amazing, however, is the lack of unity and agreement among colleges throughout the country. They do not apparently take into consideration the mobile nature of the teaching force, with the result that there is waste of public resources, labour and talents of both teachers and serving teachers.

A teacher who spends a year or less attending such a course is not exempted from the same stage in any college or university outside the jurisdiction of his own.

ABDUL SHAKOOR BORA,
Ilford, Essex, Grimsby.

Love of language

Sir—Stuart Harris's outline of a possible English course based on the history of the language (Letters, November 28) follows closely a syllabus I have used with adults in a course of general education.

It proved a useful way of bringing together the odds and ends of history left in people's minds from school days as well as of "unpacking" puzzles in grammar and usage and the vagaries of our orthography. It was a good introduction to the reading of Chaucer and Shakespeare (Loves Labour Lost is a play about language among other things).

Such a syllabus can help vocabulary enlargement and the study of when new words came into the language is a point at which social history and the growth of ideas can be explored. It is important for the students to know the course as a whole and I found that this can be a more difficult part of it for students at least part-time ones, to spend.

ENID HUTCHINSON,
92 Church Road, Richmond.

Parents' right to choose?

Sir—I was rather surprised to read a letter from Mr J. B. Phillips, of Bournemouth Grammar School (December 22) in which he argues that Mr St John-Stevens was wrong to cite Article 2 of the Protocol of the European Convention on Human Rights as being valid for parental rights in education. He also goes on to suggest cynically that lawyers would be fat on any litigation on this point, and asks why the argument has never been used before by schools faced with reorganization.

It is difficult to see how any lawyer could grow fat if there was no case to answer, and no argument is invalidated for want of a precedent. We have already had an expert opinion on this matter when Professor B. A. Wortley QC wrote in *The Times* on November 25 to

the effect that Anthony Eden's declaration when he signed the protocol in no way detracts from the clear rights of parents to choose their children's schooling.

As has only recently been clearly demonstrated in the TV licence case in the Court of Appeal, it is still possible for an individual to challenge "Them"—and win conclusively, and I am quite certain that there is room for yet another landmark to be made in English legal history.

William Pitt rightly said in 1783: "Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants; it is the creed of slaves."

WESLEY WOOLHOUSE,
Committee member,
Bournemouth Grammar School Parents' Association.

station entrance on honour board in oak on which each year should be inscribed in gold letters the names of those passengers who had been fortunate enough to have a successful journey.

My station? he went as humbly, "doesn't issue tickets for Oxford or Cambridge very often. Our nearest station is Liverpool and very many of our passengers go there and they like it very much and make some exceedingly useful and interesting journeys."

"Surely," he urged, "we ought not to set up these artificial criteria of what is or is not a good station, by registering how many first-class tickets are booked on a particular line? A good station is to be judged by far more subtle and complex criteria."

But he got no further. Amid a howl of derision the poor man was hustled out of the hall, minus his cap and pelted with Bradshaws and time-tables.

As the upron was at its height, my train stopped with a jolt and I realized that we had reached Cambridge. It was time for me to stumble out rather sleepily, make my way in the headmaster's usual meeting.

The master painted in glowing colours the many advantages of this scheme, in particular pointing out how it would provide an incentive to other passengers to book similar tickets on the Oxford and Cambridge lines, even though, as he laughingly put it, they might be infinitely happier and more useful to their fellows if they went on a quite different journey to another station. Speaker after speaker, especially from stations on rose to support the resolution, and the enthusiasm was at its height when the master of a station I had not heard of (a rather insignificant figure in a tattered cap) asked permission to speak.

He wished, he said nervously, to oppose the motion. There was an emphatic rumble from the hall but he stumbled on with his argument, trying to make himself heard. The rest of his case, so far as I could gather, was that stations, and station-masters, exist to serve the passengers, no matter whether the passengers hold first-class or third-

1976 Act will 'require' all l.e.a.s to end selection

by Mark Vaughan

All L.E.A.s will be required to end selection and submit plans for comprehensive schools under the terms of a Bill published by the Government last week.

If passed by Parliament, the 1976 Education Act will also allow the Secretary of State for Education and Science to "require" L.E.A.s to tell him of their plans to take up places at independent schools. He will be able to approve or reject plans and to revoke previous approvals.

Governors and managers of voluntary schools may be required to submit comprehensive plans to help to complete authorities' secondary reorganization schemes. The Secretary of State can call for fresh proposals if he does not like them.

The Bill states that L.E.A.s will have to implement proposals submitted to the Secretary of State "within five years after the date on which they are submitted or transmitted". But proposals affecting voluntary aided schools will not be approved if the managers or governors satisfy the Minister that they cannot meet their share of the cost.

Authorities will be permitted to change less than the economic cost for school milk.

Another clause extends mandatory student awards to cover courses for the higher diplomas of the new Technician Education Council and the Business Education Council which replace existing BND courses.

The Bill will not affect schools for the physically and mentally handicapped, or schools for autistic and dementing.

The clause which requires L.E.A.s who have not yet completed secondary reorganization under comprehensive lines to submit proposals says that "local education authorities shall, in the exercise and performance of their powers and duties relating to secondary education, have regard to the general principle that such education is to be provided only in schools where the arrangements for the admission of pupils are not based (wholly or partly) on selection by reference to ability or aptitude."

Another clause says: "If at any time it appears to the Secretary of State that progress or further progress in giving effect to the

provisions of this Act is not being made, he may require the authority to submit proposals for the improvement of its secondary education."

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Masters seek a breather on common 16-plus exam

The Assistant Masters' Association was asked to make a full-scale attack on the plans for a common examination system at 16-plus. The association's leaders have written to the Schools Council demanding that any decision on the common system be put off for at least a year.

And at their annual conference next week, they are likely to pass a motion condemning the whole idea of a common examining system.

Mr Andrew Hutchings, general secretary of the AMA, said last week that many of his members had not yet received the report on the feasibility studies of the common examination system. Yet the Schools Council released the report in September.

At present the council are planning to make a decision on the proposed system next March. But Mr Hutchings said it would be unreasonable for a final decision to be taken when many teachers had not even had a chance to study all the available evidence. And he has told the Schools Council they should postpone making a recommendation until March, 1977.

"Politicians, administrators and educationalists alike could do with a period of hush on this question," Mr Hutchings said. "I think there should also be a one-year delay in making a decision on the Certificate of Extended Education for 17-year-olds."

When the AMA meet for their annual conference at Cheltenham next week examinations will be on the agenda. One motion "deplores" the proposed merger of the GCE and CSE examinations and AMA leaders may vote on this motion. Two other motions condemn the new O-level grading system and the abolition of the pass/fail concept.

Mr Mark Steadman, assistant secretary of the AMA, said that if a common examining system at 16-plus were introduced his members would probably favour an evolutionary change in the examination boards' administrative structure. He did not think they would back the Schools Council joint examination sub-committee recommendation for brand new regional and provincial boards.

Are writers being robbed?

Are writers being robbed? Will public lending right in a national attempt to put right an ancient injustice? Or will it lead to even greater inequality among authors? In fact, will it make any real difference to them at all?

These are some of the questions asked and answered in a symposium on public lending right published in the December issue of the literary monthly *The New Review*.

Almost 100 members of the literary community—from best-selling authors to poets, from publishers to librarians—gave their views. Most are in favour of public lending right, some passionately so, but their replies reveal deep disagreements about both principles and practice.

Along the way, there are some illuminating anecdotes. "We've got a publishing agreement" (Dennis Alabon). "Practically all libraries have literature" (Al Alvarez). "If it was worth more votes, then they'd do it" (Robert Lusty).

"I am sceptical of the whole notion of collecting fairness" (Peter Jay). "Apart from £4,500 put aside from teaching, I have absolutely no provision for old age, no pension scheme or savings" (David Holbrook). "Even if I write has to have another job, he will write. T. S. Elliot worked in a bank, didn't he?" (Charles Montefelt).

Thermal Physics

C. J. Adkins, M.A., Ph.D.

Thermal Physics, the second book in the *Understanding Physics* series, is designed to cover the latest GCE A-Level syllabuses of most examination Boards. It is up-to-date as regards recent changes which are now largely incorporated into physics syllabuses. It follows the recommendations of the Symbols Committee of the Royal Society with regard to conventions for allowing physical quantities and their units, and it incorporates the modern definitions of temperature scales.

Values and Authority in Schools

Edited by David Bridges, M.A., and Peter Scrimeshaw, B.A.

This book, consisting of essays by six people, all of whom are active in the field of teacher-training, discusses such issues as the problem of justification of authority, the rights of parents, teachers and pupils, the concept of democracy in schools, methods of discussion and decision-making and the role of the 'neutral' mediator.

Rebels fail in censure bid

Three attempts to censure Mr Laurie Supper, AUT general secretary, and an attempt to resign, were heavily defeated by delegates. Salford, Sussex and Exeter universities attacked the recent pay settlements and Loughborough University tried to sack Mr Supper for "suing" unionists.

Dons to vote on TUC links

University dons will vote early in the new year on whether to join the TUC. The Association of University Teachers, meeting in Swansea last week, decided to put the issue to a ballot of members in February or March.

Equal wrongs

The association says the number of women in senior positions in universities is "disproportionately low".

They are to hold an investigation and examine the factors which prevent equality of opportunity in university teaching.

The executive committee will investigate cases where women with equal qualifications, experience and publication records are paid less than male colleagues. In such cases, the association would seek redress under the equal pay and opportunities laws.

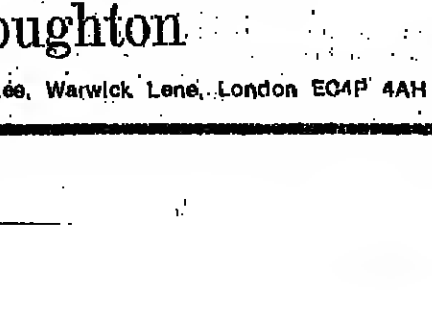
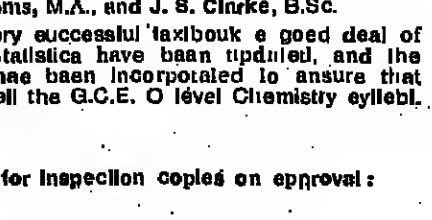
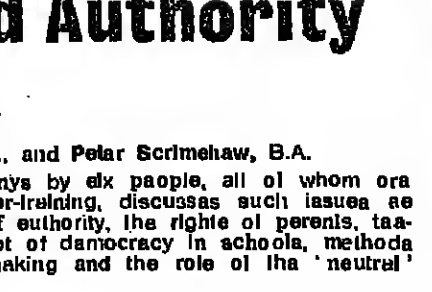
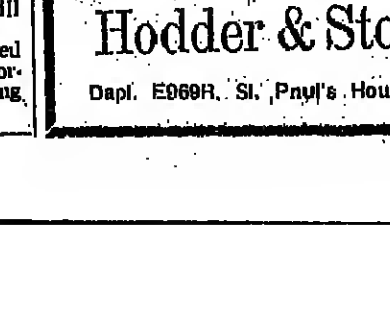
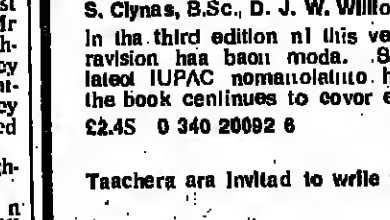
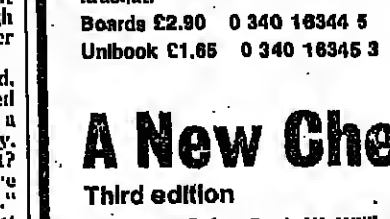
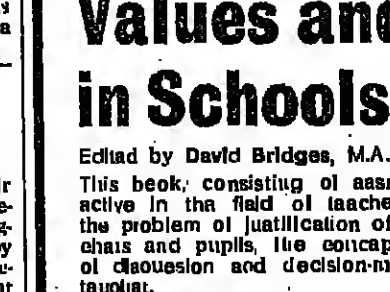
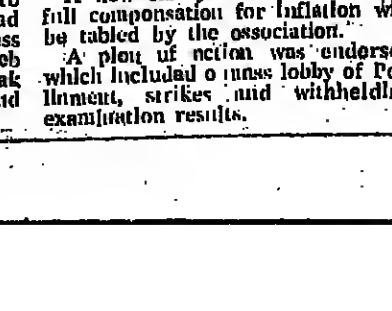
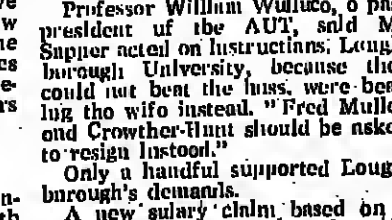
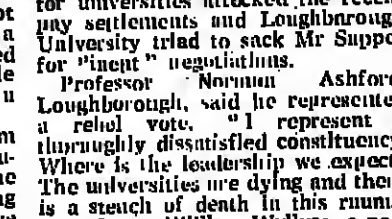
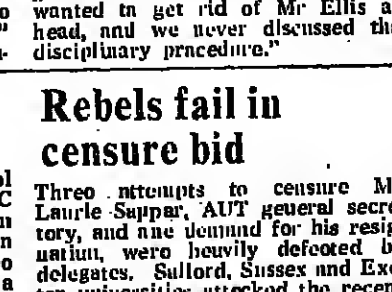
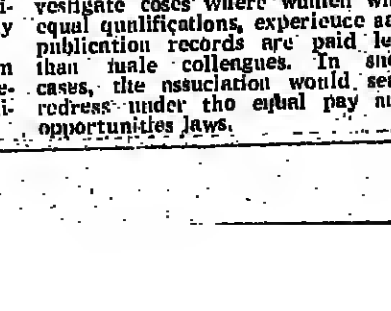
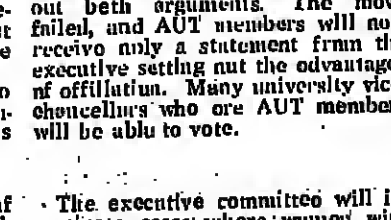
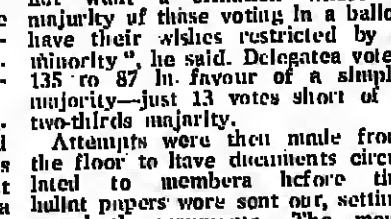
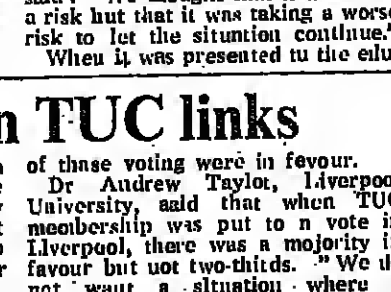
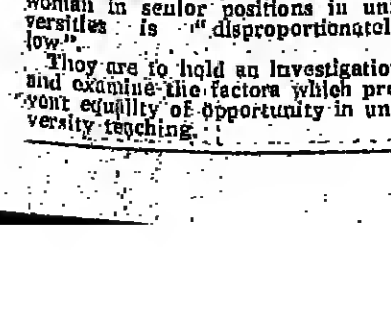
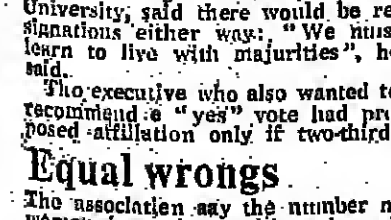
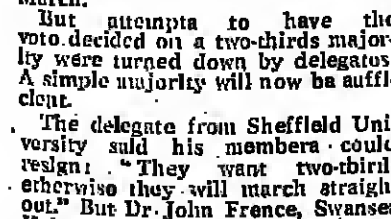
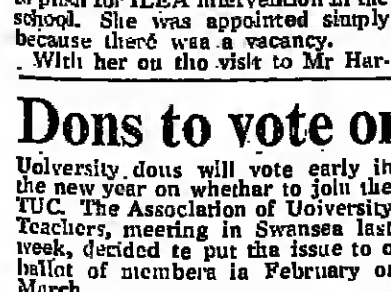
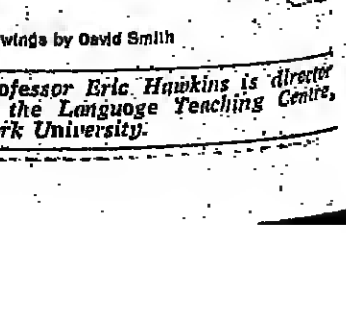
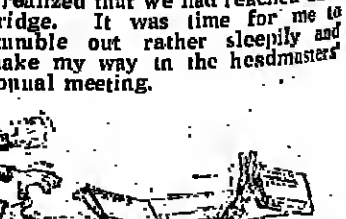
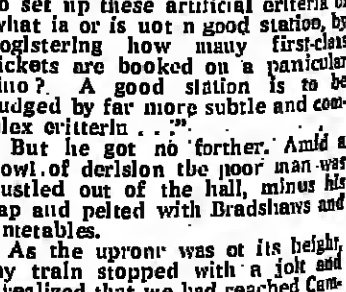
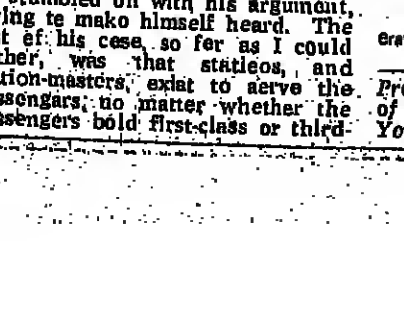
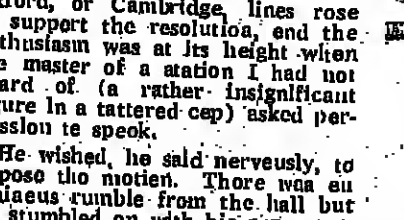
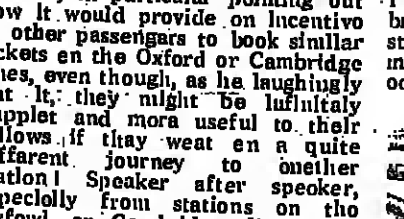
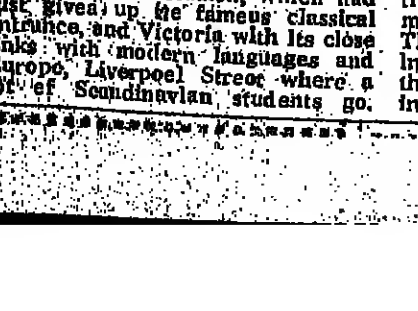
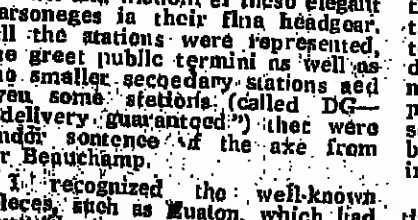
Only a handful supported Loughborough's demands.

A new salary claim based on a full compensation for inflation will be tabled by the association.

A plan of action was endorsed which included a mass lobby of Parliament, strikes and withholding examination results.

Hodder & Stoughton

Dept. ED98R, St. Paul's House, Warwick Lane, London EC4P 4AH



Sport Cricketers of year

by Asif Khan

Christopher Cowdrey, of Tonbridge School, has been named by The Cricket Society as the most promising young cricketer of the year.

The 18-year-old son of Colin Cowdrey, former England and Kent captain, has created a record by becoming the first boy to be honoured twice by the society while still at school. In 1973 he was nominated as the outstanding col of the year and awarded the Sir John Hobbs Silver Jubilee memorial prize.

The award to Cowdrey is one of several given each year by the society for cricketing achievements. Three of them go to young players. Other boys to be given prizes at a recent dinner of the society in London were Paul Winkfield, aged 18, of St Albans School, Herts, and Kim Barnett, 15, of Lock High School, Staffordshire. Mr C. G. A. Poria, president of MCC, made the presentations.

Winkfield was given the A. A. Thomson trophy, and Barnett received the Sir John Hobbs Silver Jubilee memorial prize for being the outstanding col of the year. Both were recommended to the society by the English Schools Cricket Association.

The society also make the two best players in public schools cricket. These were instituted in memory of R. S. C. Wetherell, a member of the famous Repton XI of 1918. The £400 silver trophy, featuring a cricket ball, is displayed permanently in the Cricket Memorial Gallery at Lord's.

Cowdrey, whose father also attended Tonbridge School, captained Tonbridge first eleven last summer. He also played for Kent County Club and Ground, Kent second eleven, besides representing England Young Cricketers against the West Indies youth team, and English Schools and Public Schools sides. He is a fine batsman who either opens the innings or bats at number four, a fast-medium bowler and a good covers fieldman.

He went to Tonbridge from Wel-



Chris Cowdrey

lesley House Preparatory School, Thetford, and qualified for the school in September, 1970. He gained his first place in the senior side while still only 14—a position he has retained ever since.

Winkfield has played for Cheshire Schools and was also a member of all ESCA representative teams in the last two seasons. He captained in the match against Scotland at Perth last summer and scored 88 runs. He is a left-handed batsman, a leg spin bowler and a brilliant fielding man in any position.

Barnett led Staffordshire schools in the summer, when only 14. He also played in the Midlands under-15 XI, the England under-15 XI and for ESCA against Public Schools. In this match he scored 65 runs and took 11 wickets for 51 with his legbreaks.

The Cricket Society, which was formed in 1945 and is based in London, claims to be the largest, most comprehensive and active organization of its kind in the world.

Basketball get-together

A new policy for older teenagers basketball players has brought the English Schools Basketball Ball Association and the senior body, the EBBA, closer together. Instead of having separate trials and training for the under-19 group, they are to pool resources and have a combined session which, this year, will be at Blackpool, starting tomorrow.

Mr Barry Mann (Darlington Comprehensive, Walsall), secretary of the EBBA technical committee, says that each association has selected a number of players and those chosen after this weekend's trials will form the England junior squad. The selection element will become the EBBA senior team.

This new approach also brings a lot of coaches together. There will be 30 boys at Blackpool, about half of them still at school. They include three who have represented England in the past—the captain Phil Brady, now in his third season in the squad, David Wilson, and Ian Hunt.

Heating check

Essex County Council are to check heating in schools and offices next month and advise on thermostat settings. The country fuel bill is now £5m a year.

Nursery places

With a new purpose-built day nursery at Douglas Avenue, Alparva, and two more planned for Chelmsford and Stonebridge next year, there will be about 700 places for the estimated 25,000 under-fives in the London Borough of Brent.

Books for all

A new appeal for donors is made by the Books for All campaign which, since late 1973, has sent UNESCO gift coupons worth £5,000 for the purchase of children's books for libraries in Asia, the Arab countries, Africa and South America.

Holiday centre

Wyndham School, Epsom, Surrey, is to open an activity holiday centre during the first and second weeks of August.

Correction

The two-year EEC grant to the Defoe Day Care Centre for the children of schoolgirls, students, working or isolated and depressed mothers at Hackney College, Newington, is £50,000 not £500,000 as stated in the TES December 12. This was a printing error.

On, quick, to fast reactors

Philly we are in for a minor row about the development of fast reactors in the United Kingdom, and already there are signs that the debate, when it comes, will increase and not diminish public confusion on this issue. So much can be told from the interpretations that have been given in the past few weeks of the letter from the chairman of the Royal Commission on Pollution, Sir Brian Flowers, to the Prime Minister.

What the letter said was that there are important uncertainties about the safety and utility of fast reactors still to be resolved; that the Government's best course of action would be to build what is called a full-scale "demonstration reactor"; that decisions about the commercial use of fast reactors should be postponed until that had been done, and that nothing or all should be decided until the commission itself had reported on its current review of nuclear safety.

The result has been to fortify both sides in the debate on nuclear safety. The Friends of the Earth proclaim the letter as support for their long-standing campaign against fast reactors everywhere. The nuclear buffs, on the other hand, read it as a declaration of faith in fast reactors. It will be a sign of unaccustomed grace if the Government does now have the courage to make a decision of some kind.

And, in my view, there is no doubt what the decision should be. Whatever may be the pattern of our energy economy in the next century, there is no doubt that in the remaining decades of this century, nuclear power in some shape or form is the only means by which

Science diary

by John Maddox

Industrialized countries such as Britain can meet their need of energy. But so long as nuclear power is produced by thermal reactors, the world's demand for uranium will outstrip the supply from reasonably cheap reserves in 10 years or thereabouts. Only fast reactors offer a means of keeping nuclear power cheap. In that sense, they are a commercial necessity for all of us.

The issue, then, is not whether fast reactors are safe (although, in my opinion, they are not intrinsically more dangerous than thermal reactors) but how to design them so that they will be safe. The prototype fast reactor at Dounreay has been working now for the best part of a year, and quite soon it should be possible to be sure of those points in the design which are critical for the success of a full-scale version of the plant. When that time comes, possibly in a few weeks, the government should hurry up with sanctioning the construction of a working commercially sized fast reactor, hoping against hope that it might be ready for service in the early 1980s. Then, with a little luck, it might be possible to think of commissioning further fast reactors in 1983 or thereabouts.

But this, as it happens, is what all the interested parties in the dispute would like. Whether the first full-scale fast reactor is called a demonstration reactor or something else does not matter. This is why it would be a great misfortune if Sir Brian Flowers's letter to Mr Wilson became the centre of a pointless argument.

Desolate Milton Keynes from the air.

Birth pangs of brave new city

Some time between now and 1991, there will emerge to the north of Blechley a new city called Milton Keynes, with a total population of 250,000 or thereabouts. One afternoon last week, on a wet and foggy night, it seemed more like a reconstruction of the back of the Moon than the site from which a new city would in due course spring.

With the abandonment of the Channel Tunnel and similar huge schemes, the sight of this desolate patch of the lowland Midlands is bound to provoke the question whether Milton Keynes would have been begun at all if the downturn in the economy had come a few years earlier.

More serious is the question of whether new towns of any size are in any circumstances desirable.

Over the years, British planners and architects have won applause (and medals) from their colleagues overseas on the strength of new towns as different from the old towns of Cwmbran. The people who now deserve the medals are those brave spirits who have gone to settle in Milton Keynes, which at present seems to consist of distant patches of buildings.

In due course, according to the plans, there will be an open space near the city centre where people will be able to entertain themselves of an evening by watching what's called a water organ—a device for illuminating with coloured lights all sets of water which come and go with the organ music played over loudspeakers.

The people now settled there will no doubt be well into middle age by the time the organ springs to life. Their children—this is my guess—will have emigrated elsewhere.

People



Mr Gordon Samuel David Perry, chairman of the Pembroke Teachers' Centre, Dyfed, is one of the nine new life peers named last week.

Schools

Mr Bernard S. Parry, deputy head, The Risedale School, Catterick Garrison, to be head, on retirement of Mr Eric Hall, the present head.

Colleges

Mr B. S. Cone has been appointed principal-designate of the City of Liverpool College of Higher Education, to be created in September 1976 by the amalgamation of C. F. Mott and Ethel Wormald Colleges of Education.

Mr Gerard O'Donnell to be principal of Buckingham College of Further Education, nr Rothenham, from April 26.

In brief

Enter the girls

Epsom College, Surrey, Trent College, Long Eaton, Derbyshire, and Savenoaks School, Kent, are to admit girls to their sixth forms from September.

Appeal heeded

In response to a special appeal, friends of the Diamond Riding Centre for Handicapped Children at Queen Mary's Hospital, Sutton, Surrey, have donated £2,000 towards the £18,000 a year needed to keep it going. Another £500 has come from the general public.

Staggered hours

Teachers are to discuss with Derbyshire Council plans to stagger school hours as part of the effort to solve rush-hour transport problems.

Ban lifted

A ban on smoking at an Essex school for disturbed children has been lifted because too many of the 60 pupils broke the rule. Mrs Margaret Davey, chairman of the managers of The Essex Home School, Chelmsford, said, however, that the ban would continue at "certain times and places such as the dormitory".

Heating check

Essex County Council are to check heating in schools and offices next month and advise on thermostat settings. The country fuel bill is now £5m a year.

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10/11

City problems; gypsy literacy

12

Ballet

13/14

Books: sociology and anthropology; education; modern languages

15/16

Resources: computers; geography

17

Talkback: book review winners

Golden eggs

Jeremy Bugler talks to Louis Alexander, a best-selling English author

virtually unknown in his own country



Louis Alexander's study.

"more like an extension of Longman's designing or production office, than a room for musing and scribbling"

although it meant an immediate drop in earnings and came back to Haslemere, with his Greek wife and two young children.

Back in Surrey, Alexander worked out the principles he wanted for his own course. He made some developments that are commonplace now, he says, but were radical enough at the time. He wanted to emphasize English as a foreign language and to scrap the usual texts that wrote of pubs and cricket; he wanted pupils and teacher books to interlock, so both were guided.

More than anything, Louis Alexander had become convinced that the great barrier to rapid progress in learning English was the step of translation: of understanding an English phrase only through its Spanish/Portuguese/Arabic equivalent. So he cut out the translation and used pictures of simple situations like people shaking hands, with only the English words beneath. All the language skills of understanding, speaking, reading and writing were taught using and to scrap the usual texts that wrote of pubs and cricket; he wanted pupils and teacher books to interlock, so both were guided.

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one million copies a year. Alexander's retainer was drowned in a sea of royalties.

Louis Alexander is a very exact, very affluent, professional man. Because of these qualities, when he describes what he has done, he is not cruising on an ego-trip but simply recording, accurately. He knows well why *New Concept English* caught on: its method was a great change. Propounding it, Alexander found himself caught up in lecture tours abroad, either under the aegis of Longman or the British Council.

He travels today four months of the year, particularly to parts of the world not traditionally associated with British culture, especially South America. His courses have been taken up there avidly "right up to the borders of the United States". When he is lecturing, he is always demonstrating how he thinks English as a foreign language should be taught.

Once in Yugoslavia he was challenged by the educational authorities: teach this class of Serbians for two weeks while we watch. Alexander accepted and before the widening eyes of Yugoslav officials, he taught for the fortnight, to a class whose language was a mystery to him. The Serbians moved rapid progress and in the two weeks, Alexander was asked for only two contradictory translations of English into Serb.

Louis Alexander is just the kind of person those American corporations mean when they're job-hunting for "a self-starter". It is not surprising he is a good teacher, but how does his method work for others? He is from the most disastrous system when it goes wrong and it's the most efficient and dynamic system when it goes right. It makes the teacher much more active. He or she

cannot sit back, get the class to do some exercises while he completes *The Times* crossword. The teacher has to give; he has to perform; and you judge him on the performance he elicits. In short, he becomes a conductor. These methods seem to demand teachers who are reasonably outgoing, and who strain on them is much greater. The reward is the progress of the students: "I am wholly, 100 per cent committed to audio-visual teaching and monolingual communication that cuts out the barrier of the English translation," says Alexander. On these principles, Alexander has written a course for young children (*Look, Listen and Learn*) that is selling 600,000 books a year, and a course called *Target* for secondary schools that is selling briskly. He is aiming for a network of courses, which will later embrace English for specialists such as the businessman, the doctor, the scientist.

Between the publishers and Alexander, little is left to chance when they are planning a new course. "We do it this way. First of all, we decide who the book is aimed at. Second, we decide the price it's going to sell at; third, how many pages; fourth, what we can do in the space."

Everything he writes is tied in with the size of the eventual page it is to appear on. The depth and width is known before he starts writing or his secretary typing. In this way, his study is more like an extension of Longman's designing or production office, than a room for musing and scribbling. Longman say "With Alexander, it's more a project than a book. There's a team now working with him."

This way of working, being methodical but passionate about the product, has brought Alexander his success. Yet he eschews any idea of leaving Britain, or other wealthy textbook writers have done. "If you do the methodology thing and move to Malaga, you're in cutting yourself off. One either accepts this life with its tax but other compensations, or one does not." © Jeremy Bugler

COURSES



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Learning on site

Adeline Hartcup
looks at some adult
literacy work
being done with gypsies

On a bleak and frosty evening, I sat in on an unusual adult literacy class at a gypsy site near the village of Bear, in Kent. Since the summer of 1969 about 50 gypsies have lived on the 12 pitches, each with its caravan and a hut containing sink, inventory and electric point. The first families came from the grass verges of the A2.

We started off by going round the trailers, calling for members of the class. Diana Burgoyne, the teacher, has found that if she does not do this they do not turn up, or arrive half-an-hour late. One girl will not come alone because she is frightened of the dogs on the site. (Not without reason, it seems. Another girl in the class had a cat which had been attacked by the dogs and killed.)

That evening one or two were away with flu, so only three girls and a boy—all in their late teens—turned up at the ex-mobilo dental clinic, which is used on Mondays for a play-group, youth club and the adult literacy class. It is out, much of a place—30 feet by 8 feet, on two levels, undecorated, without room for everyone to sit down. No blackboard, nowhere to rest a book.

Nevertheless it was a cheerful, friendly class. Because gypsies, like most other illiterates, are ashamed and embarrassed at being unable to read, Diana Burgoyne explained that I was hoping to write an article which would be read by teachers. Perhaps some of them would be attracted by the idea of teaching gypsies to read, and then more classes could be started, and more gypsies taught.

Diana Burgoyne's teaching is basic and patient. She uses a phonic method based on the Gravesend READ scheme, starting with letter sounds, word recognition and then three-letter words.

The class had homework to do during the week, mainly copying, but still had not mastered many simple vowel and consonant sounds. Later they go on to special question cards, sentences and composition. The books they use, the West Midlands Travellers' Scheme, have stories and illustrations featuring gypsies, horses and caravans.

Everyone agreed they learned more in a smaller class, when one or two were away. When Ernest comes, he fools around and they did not get on. Fanny had been to last year's lessons, so she was ahead of the others, and found it hard not to blurt out the answers. Betsy and Mary are sisters, and come together. A third sister comes too, with her husband, though they can manage only half a class each, as there is a baby to look after.

Sam is a cheerful lad who looks older than his 14 years, and enjoys calling the others "Dumb-dumb" whenever he is a step ahead. I asked him if he had ever been to school. Yes, he had, for two years before they came here. Then the new school was too far from the site, and anyway there was not a place for him. (Gypsies are often told that one.) I asked Sam why he wanted to learn to read. Well, he might need to drive a lorry, and then there would be signposts and traffic directions to follow. You cannot drive, these days, if you do not know how to read.

The Bear class is one of the most successful and longstanding attempts at gypsy literacy, but it is not the only one, even in Kent. A pioneer scheme was launched at Sevenoaks two years ago. This involved

six members the first week, five the next, and two months later it petered out, almost certainly because the class was held in a hall away from the site. The effort of going and the stigma of being seen there deterred the gypsies, who were also unaccustomed to a large, intimidating building.

In July, 1972, John Harris was appointed warden of the Bear gypsy site, and he set to work, with the families there, to improve conditions. One day he telephoned Gravesend Adult Education Centre to say that several families had asked about an adult literacy class. Was anyone available to do this?

Donald Kerrick, the Gravesend Centre principal and a past chairman of the National Gypsy Education Council, was the right person to ask. It happened that a girl was coming to the district to teach gypsies who were not on official sites, and she agreed to start the class at Bear. Three adults and three over-16 teenagers wanted to join. They met on two afternoons each week in the family caravans. This meant dislodging children and other members of the family, but the scheme prospered till the gypsies moved off in the summer to work on farms.

In October, 1973, an ex-mobilo dental clinic arrived on the site. Diana Burgoyne is already a literacy tutor on a voluntary scheme run by the Gravesend centre, and she also teaches gypsy children at the local primary school. Two years ago she taught the Bear gypsies voluntarily; with more than six in the class, she is now paid for her help. (Since the local government reshuffled Bear is to Dartford, which has about 3,500 illiterates, and is getting one of Kent's three full-time special literacy appointments.) The gypsies used to pay for their lessons—now the county provides free tuition for all illiterates.

There's not much sign of the old gypsy customs at Bear, apart from a few Romany words and the two traditional social campfires for the men and women to gather round for conversation and story-telling. Betsy, Mary, Fanny, Sam and their families didn't look or sound like gypsies, and the trailers are all unromantically, but no doubt comfortably, modern.

It seems that gypsies today have lost their own culture without, so far, finding much to take its place. What they see of gypsy civilisation—on television and at school, for example—is irrelevant and unattractive to them. History and geography lessons mean little to gypsy children. They want to be literate in order to understand road-signs, read labels in shops, find a job, or know what horses are racing—not so as to read books or newspapers.

The Southern Gypsy Education Council have been given £1,800 by the Adult Literacy Resource Agency to expand the work at Bear and elsewhere. The dental clinic, cramped and uncomfortable as it is, has the advantage of being inside the site and looking something like a gypsy trailer. It could be used more often, for more classes. (Instruction in the use of sewing-machines and woodwork tools has already been requested.) More helpers, an adequate building, on the site, for community activities, and a mobile library to tour official and unofficial gypsy sites would all be valuable.

Donald Kerrick, Diana Burgoyne and their colleagues feel that the gypsies have missed their slice of the nation's educational cake. Other adult illiterates have at least been through some routine schooling. Gypsies, swaying away every summer to work on farms, have not. So gypsy illiteracy can't be solved quickly. Funds are needed, and so are volunteers. It is slow work, but rewarding.

Problem in the city

"Problem in the City" is an exhibition of photographs and related text which looks at the way people live in and adapt to their changing urban environment. Three photographers—Nick Heiges, Larry Herman and Ron McCormick—were commissioned by the Royal Town Planning Institute to document the pressures of city life in Greater London, Merseyside, the West Midlands, Tyneside, South Wales, Clyde side and the South Coast.

In looking at the urban landscape, they have examined the role of the town planner, and the place of the community in the planning process. Through their material they make a plea for the power and responsibility for changing the environment to be extended to each and every citizen.

The exhibition, from which these photographs are taken, is at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, until January 3, after which it will tour other British cities. Admission is "almost free".



'Ossie', the Gorbals, Glasgow.



School crossing patrol, Handsworth, Birmingham.



Street party, East Ham, London.



Red Road flats, Glasgow.

by Michael Church

Right: Butter Week street fair in St Petersburg—an aquatint done by John Augustus Atkinson in 1803

Far right: Tainara Karsavina making up for 'Petrushka'—a drawing by Valentine Gross



Since its recent revival by the Royal Ballet we now have two, alternative—and equally authentic—versions of the greatest of these ovens, *Petrushka*. And the interesting thing

He interpreted the scenario thus: "If Potruska were to be taken as the personification of the spiritual and suffering side of humanity—or shall we call it the potential principle?—the lady Columbine would be the incarnation of the eternal feminina; the gorgeous Blackmoor would serve as the emanation of everything squealsome, attractive, powerfully masculine and undeservedly triumphant."

Between variations on this work (Bebels eventually designed five) differ in a number of ways, some trivial, some less so. No one in the Royal Ballet looks like equalling Dudley von Loggenberg's independent Moor, but with Nureyev's help, he's technically astonishing Patruschko. If the Pasha's fall from the crowd is too intrusive and variegated, the Royal Ballet's is too quiescent. The "front drop" curtain at Covent Garden is exquisite. Counterpoint in the opposing team's production is less garish. The Royal Ballet have the most likable stage boys I have ever seen.

Children, critics? Of course. But what power is it that ever fails to make certain moments of the Royal Ballet?

to blood that has wings. She does not try to discover what there is at the back of Poulenc or Laurencin. She is guided by intuition. Without the slightest calculation, and by simply obeying the rhythm, and the exigencies of the frame she has to fill, she is about to create a masterpiece: the *fétes galantes* of her time."

A revised edition of Richard Buckle's biography of Nijinsky will be reviewed shortly in the TES.

Eileen Barker on 'relative' knowledge

The problem comes into a

On turning to the question of how the social scientist can know about social reality, one is confronted with an immediate difficulty. The social scientist is a man, a social animal, and he is related to his own particular background. If he were not a social animal he would be unable to understand anything. He is not interested in mere bodily movement but in the social behavior which is an incomprehensible, purposeful behavior which takes place within a context of socially constructed meanings and expectations. However, he is unable to share completely the social vision of any particular person, and he is liable to be schizophrenic. The exercise in which he is engaged demands

The hubbub on *Paradigms* and *Fairy Tales* cloaks, curiously, what it can be read as in a variety of other ways—as a critique of the practice of academic feminism or on methodological perspectives and techniques and as an allegorical fairy tale. It is because of the originality of this last aspect, which forms the framework of her presentation, that I think that her genuine contribution to methodology might well be dismissed by staid academics who know “the proper way” to contribute to such weighty matters as the science of methodology. As I have already suggested by a Grid Star Rabbit along the labyrinthine of Social Science Wonderland, through a Looking Glass Durkheim he encounters the delicate web of silkian embracing the formidable thicket of thorned and barbed mutine. (I give, I give, I give.)

Professor Douglas exemplifies an almost devastating perception and awareness of the relativism of knowledge in her collection of essays entitled *Implicit Meanings*. She relentlessly ferrets out the symbolic structures of society, the implicit meanings which blind the various orders of society together, the underlying assumption that makes the consistency between and within their several departures of reality. The way man classifies animals, the way he views his body, cuts his food (what he eats when and with whom), what constitutes a noble, all these, what

But while an "out-there" reality may not dictate the meaning we bestow on it, is it too much to believe it does suggest some of our socially constructed reality? Surely there is a relative relativism to knowledge? Must we indefinitely surrender certain knowledge to the relativity in whose service may be found the

John Eggleston on educational administration

manner in which the school contributed to this. Various social malaise indicators might be used, particularly those directly concerning the young, such as vandalism, truancy and juvenile delinquency."

particular interest is Midwesterners' concept of the direct responsibility of the community for the community school—a school that is, in turn, responsible to the community. His policies would involve considerable localization of

managements. For example, he writes: "Naturally, the question of the school budget would devolve on to the school management body, it would be the physical fabric of the building. Repairs, maintenance, decoration."

...the school would become a localized affair. Supplies and materials of all kinds would fall under the prerogative of the local school end, in general, the day-by-day administration of the school would no longer be the direct responsibility of the authority. Their authority, in these regards, would be the servant rather than the master of the schools, supplying them as they, the schools, requested, not as it, the authority, commanded!

In such a system how would community evaluation take place? In facing this question Midwinter shows that for all his egalitarian enthusiasm he is sensitive to the often traditional concern of a local community. He lists a number of criteria including GCE and CSE and also what he calls "communal climate".

"Lastly, there would be the social tone of the district and the

manner in which the school contributed to this. Various social malaise indicators might be used, particularly those directly concerning the young, such as vandalism, truancy and juvenile delinquency."

In listing these criteria Midwinter is showing that he recognizes that the criteria a community uses to evaluate its schools may well be a long way removed from those employed by a radical educator. His attempts to juxtapose and reconcile these incompatibilities constitute some of the most valuable points of the book. He is right to tell us that change, that would be needed in our present arrangements in order to achieve the kind of localized systems he advocates, and sets out a radical strategy for the local control of schools.

Yet to focus attention on educational administration is to miss much of Midwinter's analysis because this is but one part of the concept of the community he is advocating. His assumption is that . . . as educationists were about the task of community education, others would similarly be applying themselves to the job of community law and order, community health and so forth.

Though Milwinder's analysis contains many unfulfilled and even unsubstantiated arguments and almost certainly underestimates many of the difficulties, it is none the less deserving to be taken seriously as a pointer to a more participative democratic society. His vision is certainly one of a social system in which both children and adults have the opportunity to construct in more fully to power and decision-making. But can it be achieved? The author's study is a rather bleak one, but the individual when history shows how frequently it has had precisely opposite effects? Unless Milwinder can reassure us more effectively on this central issue, his book offers no more than hope—persuasive yet

Antony Flew on the philosophy of education

tively good. This assumption has only to be seen, to be seen to be false. An opponent of normative egalitarianism no more has to be a normative egalitarian than an opponent of socialism has to be a socialist.

ference organized by the Royal Institute of Philosophy in the autumn of 1973. Such a conference on the philosophy of education could not have been held in the United Kingdom before the Peters transformation came into being and exploded this particular academic sub-world. The proceedings consist in five symposia: "Autonomy as an Educational Ideal" (R. F. Deserd, Elizabeth Telfer, R. M. Hare); "Educationalism and the Development of the Understanding" (R. K. Elliott, Glenn Laugford, P. J. Hirst); "Quality and Equality in Education" (D. E. Gifford, R. G. Aiken, R. A. Atkinson); "The Nature of a Teacher" (Mary Warnock, Richard Norman, Alan Monseigneur); and "Academic Freedom" (S. C. Brown, A. Phillips Griffiths, R. S. Pater).

It is with the third subject that the sporks begin to fly; although, as the Chairman only partly intimates, neither spokesmen takes the full measure of his opposition. Coquer cannot believe that there are equalities for the policy of the two sides and independent, while they demand equality even when superiority cannot be seen as attained at someone else's expense. He, therefore, is concerned only to show that the policy of the two sides might be used to raise the lowest educational levels must not be put to pushing up the top peaks of achievement. In the opposite direction, for the spokesmen, surely is a positive and independent value, mistakes it that anyone not with him to this must have some sort of inequalities—holding that the two sides are not equal in the educational sense, but that the country must

tively good. This assumption has only to be seen, to be seen to be false. An opponent of normative egalitarianism no more has to be a normative egalitarian than an opponent of socialism has to be a socialist.

Mary Warnock argues from her own experience as a headmistress that there are important teaching situations in which it is a condition of good teaching that the teacher be regarded as not neutral. Then as a moral philosopher she argues that it is a condition of holding a moral position that the holder should not believe that other and incompatible stances are—as they so frequently are—also equally valid. Toleration requires that one should respect other disinterested and conscientiously formed opinions, and concede to those who hold them their right to differ. It does not require that we should allow that they are

Norman agrees with the main point about neutrality. But he finds obnoxious "political values" and indoctrination in "the notorious 'Janet and John,' or their equivalents." He also protests his devotion to liberal ideals: "I want those whom I teach to become free human beings, sceptical of authority, capable of seeing through and rejecting the ideological prisms of existing social institutions, capable of directing their own lives

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YOUNG READING
FIGHTING AND FOSSILS

Mary Hoffman

At Willie Tucker's Place. By Alison Morgan. Chitto & Windus £1.95, 0 7011 5067

Unpretentious is the word for Alison Morgan's fourth children's book: the sights are not set very high but the target is fairly hit. Not an inappropriate metaphor for a story about a boy who is beguiled by soldiers.

Don Price is full of secret eight-year-old fantasies about the Army and he patiently cultivates the friendship of an executive Willie Tucker, just because Willie lives next to a training area. Don's carefully laid plans eventually result in a week spent at "Willie Tucker's place" and a chance to come face to face with the military dream.

Not that Willie shares in the dream, of course, since he lives on the edge of the reality. Don is constantly frustrated by his friend's indifference to all the exciting activity around his house but it is not long before events drag Willie as deeply into military manoeuvres as Don could wish.

The two boys come from distantly related, totalling convincing Welsh families, one living on a hill farm (complete with Rayburn), the other outside a dull small town where they sing in the annual eisteddfod—largely and circumstantially described. That people are not always what they seem and that nothing can give you a bigger surprise than a known quantity is well supported by the relationship between the boys. Mercifully but decisively Don learns to respect his companion, equable friend and what began as exploitation develops into genuine preference.

Willie's transformation from a doll, fat boy to a solid, reliable

one: "strong as a bull, brave as a lion", is perfectly feasible but the circumstances in which it takes place are less so. There are good arguments for the heroes of children's books performing odder or super-adult deeds, to compensate the reader for the frustrations of being small and inexperienced in an intractable world. But however successful and brave eight-year-olds may be they do not make credible rescuers of grown-up soldiers from bogs.

The Fossil Snake. By L. M. Boston. Bollen Hill £1.55, 0 370 10972 4.

The fossil snake has been snugly curled up inside a rock for several million years when its sanctuary is suddenly split open during the careless delivery of some building materials. Rob, whose father is building a wall, finds the snake-filled stone, keeps it in the face of all opposition and cherishes it under his bed-room radiator.

Two days later, the volume of collected-up snake is missing from the piece of rock and Rob begins to lead a small-boy-cum-snake-character. It is a gentle, mellow little book, shorter and simpler than the Green Knowe series which made Lucy Boston's name. Peter Boston's circular illustrations respond, sensitively, to the mood of the story. Rob's discovery of the fossil snake is not a churchyard by moonlight; "it was old as eels as it was beautiful." But, although the story moves in a steady crescendo, it stops just short of the expected climax, baulking the reader of a proper resolution. In spite of this, it is a haunting tale and the boy's awe and respect for the "gorgeous secret" in his bedroom are delicately handled.

MAN'S INHUMANITY

Helen Grant

Primera Memoria. By Ana Maria Matute. Edited by Adolphe Burns. Harrow £2.10, 0 245 52046 5.

Since her first novel, *Los Abel*, published in 1948 at the age of 19, was runner-up for the Premio Nadal, Ana Maria Matute's reputation in Spain, Latin America and the United States has grown steadily. *Primera Memoria* is the first volume of a trilogy entitled *Los Mercaderes* and like the second volume, *Los soldados* (now in the second volume), was awarded a literary prize. This collection has been edited with introduction, notes and vocabulary by Mrs Burns for A level pupils and first-year university students.

The novel is set in Mallorca in the early days of the Spanish Civil War and is told in the first person by Maria, then a girl of 14. The author's world is one in which children and adolescents are caught up in the fratricidal horrors of a war, symbolised by the Biblical theme of Cain and Abel, which runs through many of the novels and short stories. For instance, *En esta tierra* (1955) was censored (and though reluctantly recast and published, is now out of print). *En esta tierra* and *Los hijos muertos* (1958) are the most subtly and not politically committed of her novels; the latter deals with the inference and fall of Barcelona.

Los Mercaderes, the trilogy of which *Primera Memoria* forms part, is more "moralistic" than obviously political; the title, as Mrs Burns points out, refers to those who are unprincipled, who lie and use others, trading on them for their own ends. "The evil in man, the loss of love and innocence, the isolation and alienation of the individual are the basic themes in this disturbing novel written with delicacy

and sensitivity, with poetic imagination and a keen eye for the landscape and atmosphere. Although the author does not obviously take sides with either of the participants in the civil war, the character of the grandmother, of Maria's cruel, treacherous yet dynamic cousin Borja, and others, seem to epitomize the elements on the nationalistic side which contributed to bring about the civil war. By her handling of Maria and Manuel, the victims, the author seems to suggest that blame for the corruption and destruction of the innocent is to be laid at the door of the victors rather than the defeated. But more significant is the innate evil in human nature and man's inhumanity to man.

The imaginative quality of Matute and the quiet idealism of Manuel, with his sensitivity to others, provide a gleam of hope. I wonder what an A level pupil will make of it, for it is a book almost completely lacking in a clearly defined story and is dependent on a highly sensitive response. The characters of Borja and the grandmother are most effectively presented but are not easy to understand or even believe in.

Mrs Burns provides a useful introduction which raises most of the essential problems but leaves the reader to provide the answers. The notes are short and sensible and the vocabulary is confined to words which the reader is likely to encounter in a clearly defined story. Mrs Burns's own command of the language, the information she gives about the author's life, her other novels and short stories, and the analysis of *Primera Memoria* itself will be a real help in those for whom this edition is intended. She illuminates without doing the reader's work for him, stimulates interest but avoids killing it by too much emphasis on her own ideas.

REVIEW
LETTER

Dear Sir—In his review of *Full Circle* by Black and Finn (TES, December 5) Bernard Harrison says the authors "happily ignore facts" in claiming that there has been a noticeable decline in standards of literacy.

What the authors say on this point in their preface has, however, nothing to do with the Black Papers. It is based—as they indicate—simply on solidly on their experience in writing programmes. They are designed to lighten the load and allow the teacher to teach. Projects which are working towards this were on display at Software Fayre, organised recently by the National Development Programme in Computer Assisted Learning at Olympia.

NDCAL was set up in January of last year under Richard Hooper with a budget of £3m. It will run until December, 1977. The director reports to a programme committee representing seven government departments, CBI, SSRC, UGC, the Schools Council and advisors from education and industry. Its aims include the development of Computer Aided Learning (CAL) and Computer Managed Learning (CML) on a regular institutional basis at a reasonable cost.

CAL involves the use of a computer in teaching skills or as a help to the teacher. An example is where a child works at a terminal and directly interacts with the computer which sets his questions and marks his answers. This type of scheme was used in Glasgow by Dr W. Tagg. The scheme is a T sheet which they will not usually finish until their results of the M sheet are back from the computer. The T sheet allows a wider range of questions to be set and allows the teacher to check on mistakes and presentation.

The computer will give the pupils their marks and comments on wrong answers and guidance as to which worksheet to go on to next and even which questions to attempt. The teacher is free to override this advice, the computer might suggest an R sheet but the teacher could have discovered that the pupil's poor performance had been due to a trivial misunderstanding that has now been rectified and the pupil should move on to a harder sheet.

In CML the computer is more of a help to the teacher as administrator. It should remove many of the classroom chores and leave him free to devote more time to teaching. Applications include setting, marking, analysing and setting up data banks of exam questions, choosing the best route for each pupil through a course of study and keeping records of his progress.

The *Secret Life of Plants*. By Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird. Penguin, 75p, 0 1400 3930 9.

This is a mixed up book: ill formed hypotheses "proved" by loose spun science. Tompkins and Bird set out to show how much more plants than they first appear to be and that they have emotion and respond to human emotion. This may well be, but non-replicable scientific experiments are no proof; the book is a collection of anecdotes and is absolutely irrelevant.

This book will, nevertheless be a best seller, for between its covers it touches on ESP, psychokinesis, UFOs, dowsing in fact everything which stationers and bookellers are bidding. Maybe, though, the authors are sending us all up. This book could be a joke. At least twice it seems to have overdone it. The young lady who can enter a plant and mentally is a Miss Sapp (given we are told that the colour photographs of "energy" emanating from American coins show red, white and blue.

Paul Thomas

The Human Way. By M. Russell Barnard. Collier Macmillan £2.00.

Bernard's book is a collection of handy, mainly light, readings mostly by American authors. It could be useful if backed up by well-organized teaching. But, if any of the books is to be read by students it is the best if it were Fox's, for that has some excitement of discovery in it.

M. D. Mcleod

TABLES

A splendidly clear set of tables showing the product of every number from 2 to 99 multiplied by 1 to 1050 in the Collins Essential Calculator. Collins, £1.25. Percentage tables are also included, and the book facilitates a vast range of calculations.

15 Resources

Programme for a lighter load

PAUL McGEE on Software Fayre

Talk of computers in education evokes, for many teachers, the picture of mathematically able sixth-formers pouncing away at noisy teleprinters producing obscure programmes. There are, however, other uses for computers in education that do not involve the pupil or teacher in writing programmes. They are designed to lighten the load and allow the teacher to teach. Projects which are working towards this were on display at Software Fayre, organised recently by the National Development Programme in Computer Assisted Learning at Olympia.

The last area of interest is school administration. Examples are the production of timetables and information retrieval, eg in helping schools to complete Form 7. Although this is an important area—too many highly paid senior staff spend too much time in routine clerical work and too little in teaching or organizing—none of the projects on display dealt with this. It is, however, being investigated by other bodies, eg the School Timetabling Application Group (STAG).

Mixed ability maths in the first two years of secondary school often produces many problems of classroom organization, syllabus content and transfer. The Hertfordshire Computer Managed Mathematics Project (HCCMP) is run by the advisory unit for computer-based education at Hatfield Polytechnic under its director, Dr W. Tagg. The course is split into 32 modules each of which begins with a television programme and classroom lesson.

The television programme, ensures some degree of uniformity and ensures that all pupils see the material necessary to complete the worksheets.

Children attempt a series of worksheets which have different suffixes; M for machine marked, T for teacher marked and R for remedial or revision. They always start with an M sheet for which they record their answers on a machine-readable card or document which they will not usually finish until their results of the M sheet are back from the computer. The T sheet allows a wider range of questions to be set and allows the teacher to check on mistakes and presentation.

The computer will give the pupils their marks and comments on wrong answers and guidance as to which worksheet to go on to next and even which questions to attempt. The teacher is free to override this advice, the computer might suggest an R sheet but the teacher could have discovered that the pupil's poor performance had been due to a trivial misunderstanding that has now been rectified and the pupil should move on to a harder sheet.

In CML the computer is more of a help to the teacher as administrator. It should remove many of the classroom chores and leave him free to devote more time to teaching. Applications include setting, marking, analysing and setting up data banks of exam questions, choosing the best route for each pupil through a course of study and keeping records of his progress.

The *Secret Life of Plants*. By Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird. Penguin, 75p, 0 1400 3930 9.

This is a mixed up book: ill formed hypotheses "proved" by loose spun science. Tompkins and Bird set out to show how much more plants than they first appear to be and that they have emotion and respond to human emotion. This may well be, but non-replicable scientific experiments are no proof; the book is a collection of anecdotes and is absolutely irrelevant.

This book will, nevertheless be a best seller, for between its covers it touches on ESP, psychokinesis, UFOs, dowsing in fact everything which stationers and bookellers are bidding. Maybe, though, the authors are sending us all up. This book could be a joke. At least twice it seems to have overdone it. The young lady who can enter a plant and mentally is a Miss Sapp (given we are told that the colour photographs of "energy" emanating from American coins show red, white and blue.

Paul Thomas

The Human Way. By M. Russell Barnard. Collier Macmillan £2.00.

Bernard's book is a collection of handy, mainly light, readings mostly by American authors. It could be useful if backed up by well-organized teaching. But, if any of the books is to be read by students it is the best if it were Fox's, for that has some excitement of discovery in it.

Sheets have prelates A, B, C and D, and D is meant to be difficult and C is the cut-off point, ie the point that all pupils should reach. In this way all pupils cover the basic course. There is also a parallel course covering 90 elementary topics in arithmetic where the computer sets and marks the questions.

The materials for this project are produced jointly by the teachers and the project staff. The teacher never loses control. He still introduces each topic, marks pupils' books and is always free to override the computer decision at any time. The teaching materials are subjected to continuous review by the teachers and the whole project is being assessed by a scientific group from the University of East Anglia.

Further information about the project can be obtained from Dr W. Tagg, Advisory Centre for Computer Based Education, 19 St Albans Road, Hatfield, Herts. The London Borough of Haringey's Educational Computing Centre, under its director Mr W. R. Broderick, has developed a CML package that will mark pupils' tests, prescribe work suited to individual needs, monitor individual and class progress and allow the teacher to tailor and manage other functions such as the allocation of equipment. The scheme differs from the Hatfield project in that it keeps a complete history file for every pupil.

Its designers argue that you need to keep a complete record of all the work that a pupil has done, not just his last assignment, in order to work out what his next assignment should be. The more information you store the more accurately you should be able to judge the pupil's level, but you may be tempted to computer storage and computer print.

This programme is written in FORTRAN IV so that it should be easily transferable to another computer, but a user would still need a competent programme to rewrite the hundred or so lines that deal with the history file. A test of its transferability will come in January when it starts work in Liphinst.

The present courses offered by the scheme are on respiration and though the reproduction gives them the appearance of ancient documents.

The posters are suitable for junior children. Christian Aid projects are illustrated on each poster and can be coloured by hand. The posters would need support from sources listed in the Development Puzzle (VCOAD). The cartoon posters might also be used at this stage as they show the main problems in a striking way.

These resources will help the user to reach "through the miasma of international politics so that he comes to grips with the real and basic issues". One hopes, however, that the current theme of a heartless, privileged, dominant, neglectful, rich world on the one hand, and a subservient, impotent, helpless, poverty-stricken Third World on the other, does not come out too much in black and white. The problems are less clear cut and guttural so easy to support.

Much of the material attacks our own world as if it were a crime to have succeeded and to have developed a significant civilization. It is not possible to help others through literature, resources and in material ways without continually drawing attention to economic contrasts between world blocks which are uneven, illusory and occasionally non-existent. After all, Britain is seeking aid from all quarters now, not only from the underdeveloped world of the Middle East. By AD2000 we may be a leading contender for our own Christian Aid.

Information packs are really a collection of broadsheets edited by John Munagu and Peter Shoni. They have many unusual and attractive features and are well-designed.

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16 Resources

M. J. CLARK on geography materials

Twentieth century USA

VP Filmstrips: EB 7-12 "20th Century Environment: its origins and growth—the USA" by John Bailey. Visual Publications, 197 Kensington High Street, London W8 6BB. Each filmstrip £2.75 (set of six, £14.85); optional audio cassettes £2.25 each.

John Bailey's six filmstrips are a personal invitation to look more closely at the links between people and the places that they build. The pictures present a visual image of the United States, and the accompanying handbooks (and optional audio cassettes) encourage us to seek a psychological or sociological interpretation of this image.

The result is stimulating and often surprising, though the series are skillfully arranged so as to make the experience progressive and convincing. By way of introduction, *Heritage—its Use and Abuse*—examines many of the varied cultural sources of the American-built environment. At the same time it sets us thinking about our attitudes to the resulting styles together with their many combinations, adaptations, interpretations and simple imitations.

The main themes of the series are therefor presented in three filmstrips. *Enclosure and Exposure* uses the historical dynamism of United States settlement migration to introduce the notion of environmental enclosure, and to specify some distinctions between vehicular and pedestrian environments and between the American and European versions of them.

Identity and Anonymity centres on our response to the built environment rather than its objective characteristics. Particular attention is devoted to the concept of scale—in part a visual phenomenon, but equally a matter of our association with the environment's function. Here, as so often in this series, o

probing of personal attitudes is of central importance.

A deeper investigation of the sociological symbolism of the built environment is provided by *Castles and Communities* in the form of glimpses of modern and historical buildings designed for security in isolation, buildings designed for an open community and buildings which aim for the latter function but achieve only the former.

An element of exemplification and reiteration is present in the remaining two filmstrips in the series. *Some Cities* advances the argument, mainly by adding the concept of urban morphology in general and in particular considers the handling of relationships between human scale and high-rise environment. At the same time it extends the gazetteer of American cities illustrated in the 220 artistically and technically excellent pictures in the series.

America, America opens in a similar mood of exemplification: one man's kaleidoscope of American images—some good, some bad. But the mood is essentially optimistic, and as we look again at some now-familiar facets of the United States scene we are finally persuaded to consider not so much the function and identity of the buildings as the role and individuality of their builders.

Clearly this series is aimed primarily at the American market, and although it can profitably be used for British study (particularly in a comparative framework), it inevitably loses some immediacy.

One of Mr Bailey's perceptive observations on the contrasts between European and American towns is that in Europe you travel to towns whereas in the West you travel through them. The contrast itself applies also to this series: it presents an unparalleled oppor-



tunity to travel through a great many facets of the American built environment. You don't have to accept all of your guide's value judgements or agree with his priorities, but you can hardly fail to welcome both his enthusiasm and astuteness in putting forward such a coherent personal view against which to sharpen your own. This visual study may be expensive in absolute terms, but it is also extensive, evocative and truly educational.

VP Filmstrips: North America 6. "Forests and Fibres" 7. "Livestock" 8. "Fruit and Vegetables" 9. "Grain Crops". Compiled and annotated by Ruth Way. Visual Publications, 197 Kensington High Street, London W8 6BB. Filmstrip and notes £2.50 each; optional audio cassette £2.25 each.

The VP North America filmstrip series was launched earlier this year with four introductory units examining the land, its people and its resources on a continental scale. Publication of more specialized studies has now started in the form of systematic topics (here reviewed) and regional treatments.

The 38.9 frame colour filmstrips (in double-frame or captioned single-frame format), are technically and artistically excellent, using a varied combination of aerials, landscapes and close-ups to explore land use topics. Coloured diagrams and maps

are employed sparingly but effectively to generalize the photographic information. This graphic presentation is supplemented by a detailed 16-page handbook for each filmstrip, and in addition optional audio cassettes are available giving an informal but informative 12.5 minute commentary aimed at the middle ability and age range.

In each case the treatment involves brief consideration of physical background (climate, soils and landscape) and an indication of aspects such as the appearance, growth stages, harvesting, transport, marketing and processing of the crop or animal concerned. The format is most successful in *Forests and Fibres* and *Grain Crops*, the approach concentrates on a few main crops allowing for the development of both reasonably comprehensive case studies and general background implications. For example, *Grain Crops* opens with a 10-frame general introduction covering physical base, mechanization, irrigation, plant breeding and fertilizer research.

In *Livestock and Fruit and Vegetables* this ideal is less easy to achieve, and the decision to opt for maximum coverage of crops entails inevitably superficial and descriptive treatment of many of the individual types. Selective use of pictures and full use of the supporting notes would overcome most of these problems, though care will have to be taken to increase the emphasis on small-scale production and the implications of international output and pricing, both of which tend to be neglected in favour of a large-scale but continental viewpoint. Nevertheless, teachers will find these units to be generally visually impressive and educationally satisfying.

VP Filmstrips: North America 5. "The Northwest Pacific Coast: Cool Temperate Zone", 10. "The Gulf Coast: Corn and Cattle". Compiled and annotated by Ruth Way. Visual Publications, 197 Kensington High Street, London W8 6BB. Filmstrip and notes. £2.50 each; optional audio cassette £2.25 each.

Storytime

Tallulah Pinnock Storyteller. Cassette £1.95, record £2.45. Pinnock Electronics Ltd, Electron House, Cray Avenue, St Mary Cray, Orpington, Kent.

The essence of good story-telling lies in the intimate relationship which develops between the teller and listener. However, as all parents and teachers know, there are times when the child craves a story with no personal teller available, and Pinnock Musical Storyteller point out that car journeys are one of these times.

They have produced on record and cassette the Tallulah Co stories, which are absorbing and amusing and fill this gap. Tallulah is an enchanting addition to the range of children's audio characters, combining true innocence with a knowledge of surviving all her adventures and setbacks, and occasionally coming close to losing at least one of her nine lives.

The stories and songs are written by Kate Howard and Alan Blackley, and delightfully told by Leslie Crowther. Andrea Clifford.

Correction

In our issue of December 12 the price of the Tanglefoot TGR22.2 cassette recorder was incorrect. The recorder costs £149 plus VAT.

All in the packaging

by Mike Torbe

Primary Workbooks. Williams & Co., Unit 1, Block 1 & 2, Westfield, Cloddens Road, Bishopbriggs, Glasgow G64 2NZ. Price £2.80 per set.

"They tell you more than you have to do", commented one nine-year-old boy looking at these cards, which are designed to provide schoolchildren aged eight to 12 with integrated craft, creative writing and discovery work. Each card is in four-page book form, in this card, with a colourful picture on the front, illustrating the craft work.

"It is a very simple to make a model of a hedgehog like the one in the picture. If you are careful, you can make him look very real."

Page one explains, sometimes rather casually, how to make the model. Page two has creative writing suggestions, and very much more they are, too ("Look at your model and see if you can write a short poem or an adventure story about your hedgehog. Here are some words to help you: ... nocturnal").

Pages three and four are intended to encourage the children to find things out — "discover" all you can about these creatures.

There is no indication about the suitability of cards or sets for children of various ages. Presumably

they are felt to be equally suitable for any age — a presumption which I doubt.

Children who have seen the work cards react consistently. They begin enthusiastically, attracted by the bright colours and pictures on the front, but find the assignments less inspiring. Good teachers, as the authors undoubtedly are, will have them up in use; but then good teachers will probably already have ideas of their own.

Young teachers looking for craft ideas may find the suggestions on page one helpful; and the division into Animal World, Man's World, and Make Believe is attractive. Some of the ideas on pages three and four are useful, but most are unoriginal; and there are especially the authors fall into the common trap of implicitly talking to the teacher over the heads of the pupil.

Many of the ideas clearly need a teacher's intervention and help, for example, "Make a frieze about the Story of Gloves".

It would be useful to have one complete set in the staff room for reference; but at £2.80 each they are expensive, and I would sooner buy half a dozen of the Nelson's "Multi" series, complete with teacher's manual, which this lack-

I suspect that the lack of a manual indicates the lack of any genuine rationale behind these work cards.

17

Ideas,
argument, experiences,
research



Down with Christmas!

Terry Mahoney

Last week teachers all over the country left their schools with a sigh of relief. The term's Christmas duties have been fulfilled (the word "duties" is used meaningfully).

Listen carefully to staffroom conversations in the second half of the Christmas term and you hear such comments as: "I wish I knew what time to decorate my classroom in this year". "Do you think we ought to have an all-coloured nativity scene?" "Blasted red and green! I never be ready for the end-of-term harade". And so on. Most teachers can reproduce a score of such comments.

For many schools and teachers the Christmas arrangements become too important and take up a disproportionate amount of time, resources and energy. Right through the educational spectrum, from infant school to university, the Christmas celebrations hold the same pride of place. What is there about this occasion that makes it consume maybe more educational thought than come serious pedagogical issues? Few would argue that its religious connotations render it so important.

The time has now come to reconsider its favoured position and to relegate it to a more lowly, and more sensible place, in line with any other calendar event. To make such a statement does not indicate a kitsch attitude, it merely represents a realistic approach. For example, in the Christian calendar, Easter is considered to be a time of central importance; this event is celebrated in schools, but with much less pomp and ceremony. It can be argued

that schools merely reflect society in the emphasis they place on these two events. But it can also be argued that the rest of society does not place so much emphasis on Christmas as the schools.

Having talked to teachers in primary, secondary and further education, I have found that same are concerned that decoration making, nativity rehearsals, parties and allied festive activities are interesting as "stocking fillers", but that, after serious consideration, they do not come under the heading of "educational", except perhaps in its broadest sense.

Education can only be justified in school where the learning that takes place is intentional. Now, if teachers are going to argue that anything up to seven weeks (20 per cent of the school year) is validly taken up with the kind of activities mentioned above, then they are putting ammunition into the deschoolers' hands. In fact, if the comment "I'm glad Christmas

Are Christmas activities a waste of educational time?
Talkback competition winners

is over so that we can get on with some work", is uttered by any teacher, this is powerful enough indication that all the effort that has been put in for its celebration is dubious in its educational merit.

When serious concerns about standards of literacy, numeracy and other educational issues are voiced, we should be worried that one event is so time-consuming. Of course, it can be argued that much intentional learning takes place around the central theme of Christmas, but against this thematic argument can be placed Shapton's apt phrase, as such activities merely amounting to a "putt putt of trivia".

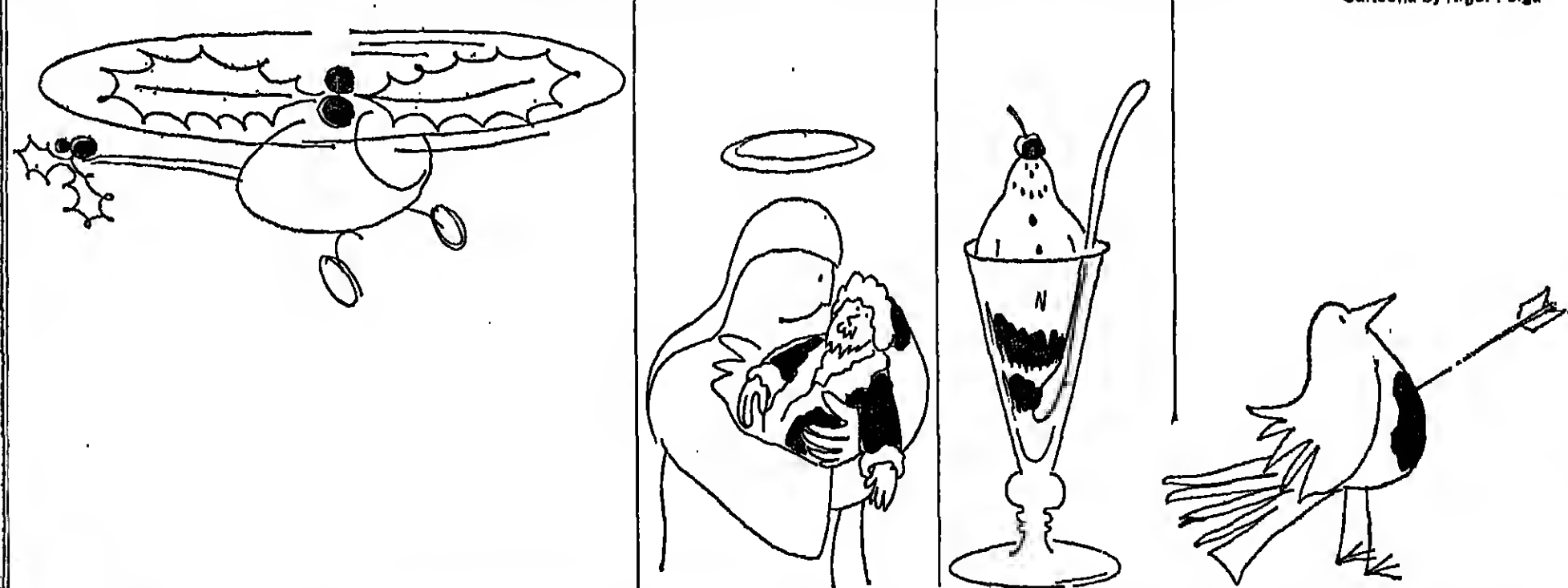
Up and down the country, classrooms are lavishly decorated, revellers, groups, school orchestras, choral societies, musicals, reviews, pantomimes and plays are rehearsed and performed, and no musician, so that during the last hectic weeks of term, parents can view the finished product, giftwrapped and sometimes quite professional. Par-

ents and children—even some teachers—understandably receive much pleasure from all this activity. But is it really worth it? Is it really the role of the school to go to these lengths? When pupils apologize to their teachers that they have not been able to do their homework or revision because of various rehearsals and performances, then the concept "education" deserves attention.

A famous comedian used to remark his audience "Temper your hilarity with a modicum of reserve". Substitute "festivities" for "hilarity", and his imperative relates sensibly to school. Teachers must always examine their objectives closely when presenting any activity as a learning activity. Time at school is precious; too much is wasted annually for the sake of Christmas.

Terry Mahoney teaches at the Milton Morebry College of Education.

Cartoons by Nigel Peiga



Resolutions and technology

by Owen Surridge

Opportunities to honour resolutions on getting to grips with educational technology are plentiful in the New Year courses offered by the National Audio-Visual Aids Centre, London.

The programme opens, with a dip into theory under the title "The Systems Approach to Education". This two-day course will discuss defining objectives, selecting methods and applying network analysis to curriculum planning. It takes place on January 12-13 and is followed by a practical introduction into the application of programmed learning techniques, including instruction in algorithms and test construction.

Closed circuit television gets a good airing, with no fewer than eight courses for novices and the experienced. Dates for the novices are: January 6-8, January 27-29, March 10-12, June 15-17 for the more experienced. February 9-13, April 5-9, May 17-21; and for those interested in portable equipment April 29-30.

There is also a special course on the use of television in micro-teaching for lecturers in colleges of education (March 25-26).

Management of media resources

and services in schools and colleges gets a variety of treatment: seminars aimed at principals, heads of department and librarians—in schools March 4-5; in colleges May 6-7. The development of resource centres in secondary schools is the subject of a course on February 18-20, in colleges of education January 22-24, and in primary schools June 1-2.

There is a course on photocopying for educational use (May 26-28) and another for those interested in slide work (May 24-28). Would-be producers of slides and tape programmes can learn the technicalities involved in courses planned for March 22-24 and June 30-July 2, while those new to the language laboratory can get to grips with the specialized teaching methods required in a session on June 28-29.

General sessions on the production and use of audio-visual aids take place on March 30-April 2, on reprography May 10-11, and on graphics May 12-14.

For those wishing to take a comprehensive view of the whole of educational technology a diploma course opens in September 1976, closing date for applications, February 28. Full details from the Registrar, National Audio-Visual Aids Centre, 254 Belsize Road, London, N.W.6.

Review

it
yourself

We print here the four winning entries in the Talkback competition, in which teachers were asked to write briefly about the book that had made most impact on their teaching this year

The Black Rainbow
Edited by Peter Abbs/Heinemann

State School
R. F. Mackenzie/Penguin

'Non-Verbal Communication and the Education of Children'

P. and H. Byers/
article in Functions of Language
in the Classroom/Teachers' College
Press, Columbia University

Language, the Learner and the School
Douglas Barnes, Harold Rosen,
James Britton and LATE/Penguin

The book which influences us most is not necessarily that which presents us with radically new ideas. It is more likely to be that book which crystallizes our own nebulous thoughts and confirms what we have always vaguely suspected.

Such a book for me is *Language, the Learner and the School*. It was the first section, by Barnes, which most intrigued me. Unlike much of modern educational writing it is jargon-free and easily readable. It describes how teacher and pupil talk to each other in the process of learning.

What held my attention was the questioning and answering. So many of our questions are unasked, but demand a precise response, and the pupil strives to give not just a right answer but the right answer, that is, the one uppermost in the teacher's mind.

Impact on my teaching? I try to ask precise questions. I try not to deny an answer which may be correct but is not exactly the one I was seeking. I try to find something positive in each answer.

I am ashamed to admit how long it has taken me to get round to it.

A. J. Orme

A. J. Orme is head of humanities at Edward Sheerien School, Burnstey.

What to do in a general English course for sixth-formers is a question that annually confronts me—and a successful answer this year is to teach a course based on this book. A series of stimulating essays on most aspects of culture—pop and serious music, permissiveness, pop poetry, novels and architecture, for example—the book invites response, often infuriates the student, but helps them to think about the way our society is heading.

I've seldom been so stirred.

Initially, it was the manner of writing. Words like *agoric*, *bing*, *clachan*—precisely the kind of words I use in my own writing—new vistas, an escape from the "prison of words", our settled way of thinking.

Next, his thinking and practice have inspired. He was fortunate in the 1930s to see theory and practice finely blended at a New Forest School. In the 1960s he brought a similar idealism to counter the rote learning taught traditionally in his Fife cop town school. He sought to nourish atavistic imaginations, to make his children fully alive. Hence the red clay modelling, canoe building, gliding, and expeditions—to Rannoch, Glencoe, and Rhum.

"Send me letters and don't forget for it is so delisting", a pupil wrote. This book is like a letter from Mackenzie. Full of anecdotes, it shares hope, admits setbacks, and urges me to look outdoors.

Jeremy Harvey

Jeremy Harvey is deputy head of The Wolf From School, Buntingford, Hertfordshire.

G. L. Gibbs teaches at Spondon School, Derby.

G. L. Gibbs teaches at Spondon School, Derby.



... both those for whom we have presents (charities of cartoonists David McKee) and those who sadly poverty presents us from so hominizing.

May the festive season be merry and free from vandalism of the kind which nearly caused all style and the leading to be hunted in the DES. Apparently, early on, the guests at one party in the Department got rather out of hand because the drink ran out, or because it didn't—versions vary. There was considerable behaviour involving the first extinction of one course, and Departmental minutiae it wasn't any of their pupils. . . .

Aristides



The BBC2 programme on the Yorkshire Schools Band was not strictly one for Christmas. But

Judge my surprise then when
ring at my doorbell the other
revealed three small girls, to
whom sang their way quite
fully through their corol while
third accompanied them on
recorder. The whole had
been carefully rehearsed.
tell you that it gave me in re
as much pleasure as I find
television from the Young
Schools Band.

Harry Golon